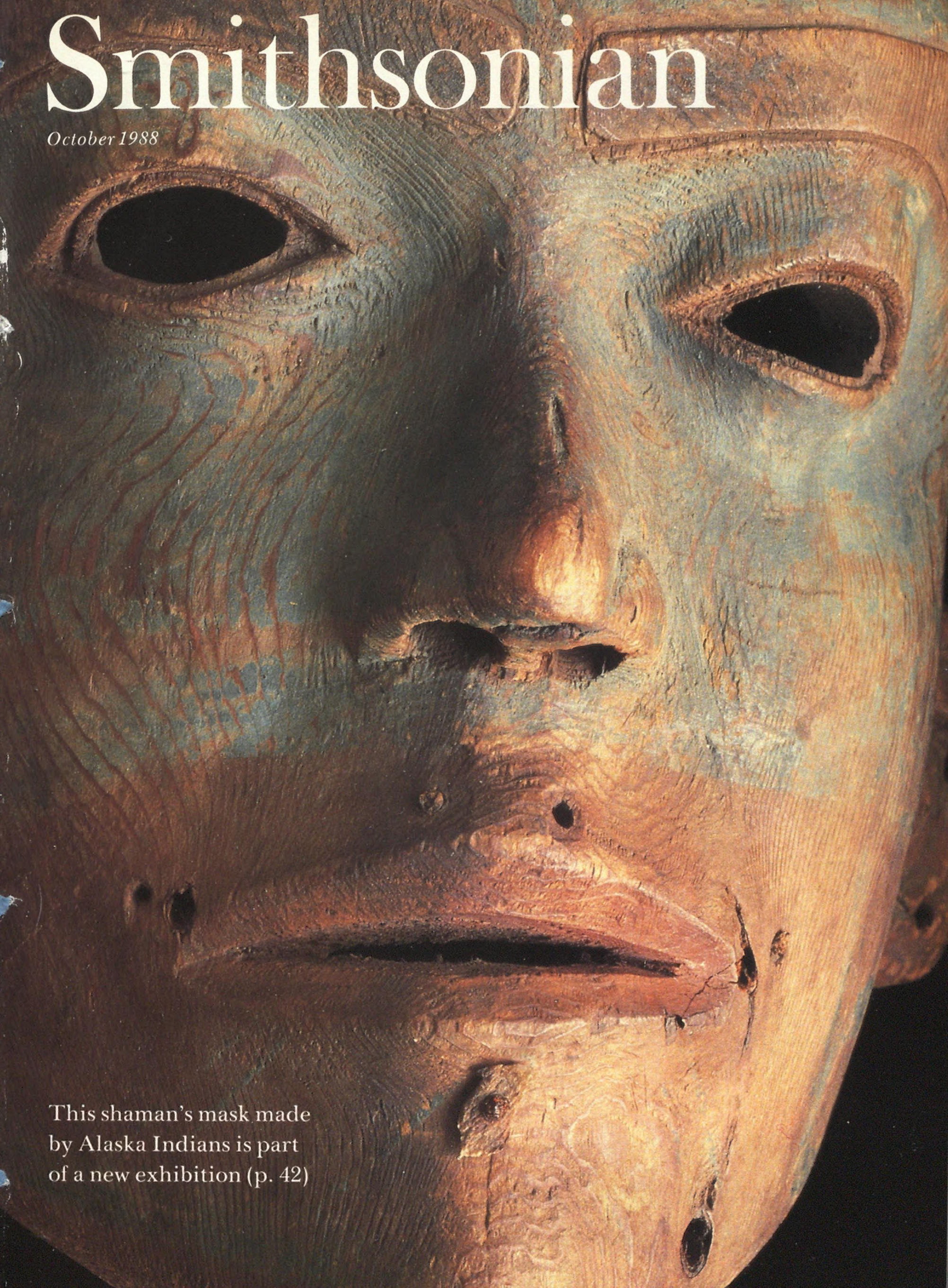
Smithsonian

October 1988



This shaman's mask made by Alaska Indians is part of a new exhibition (p. 42)

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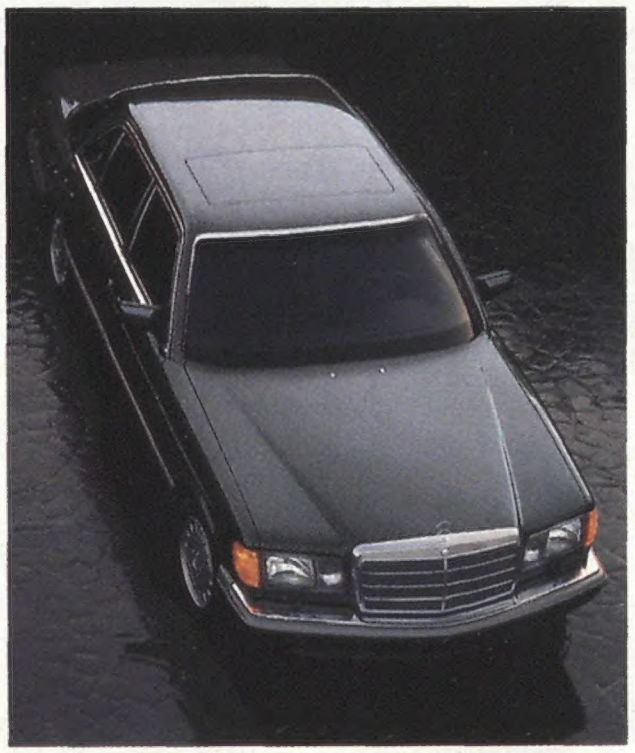

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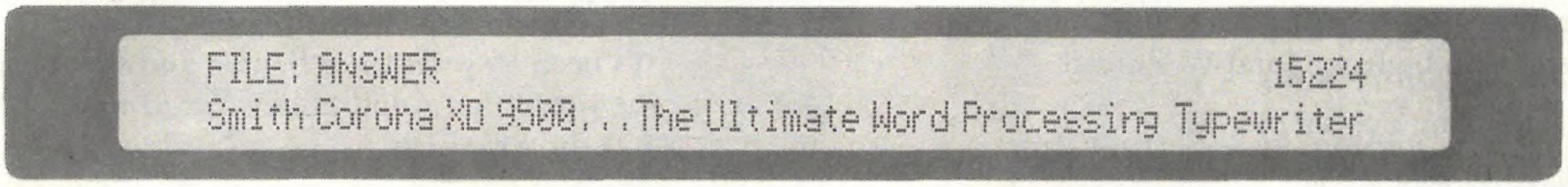

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October 1988

Smithsonian

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Decide on what you think is right, and stick to it.
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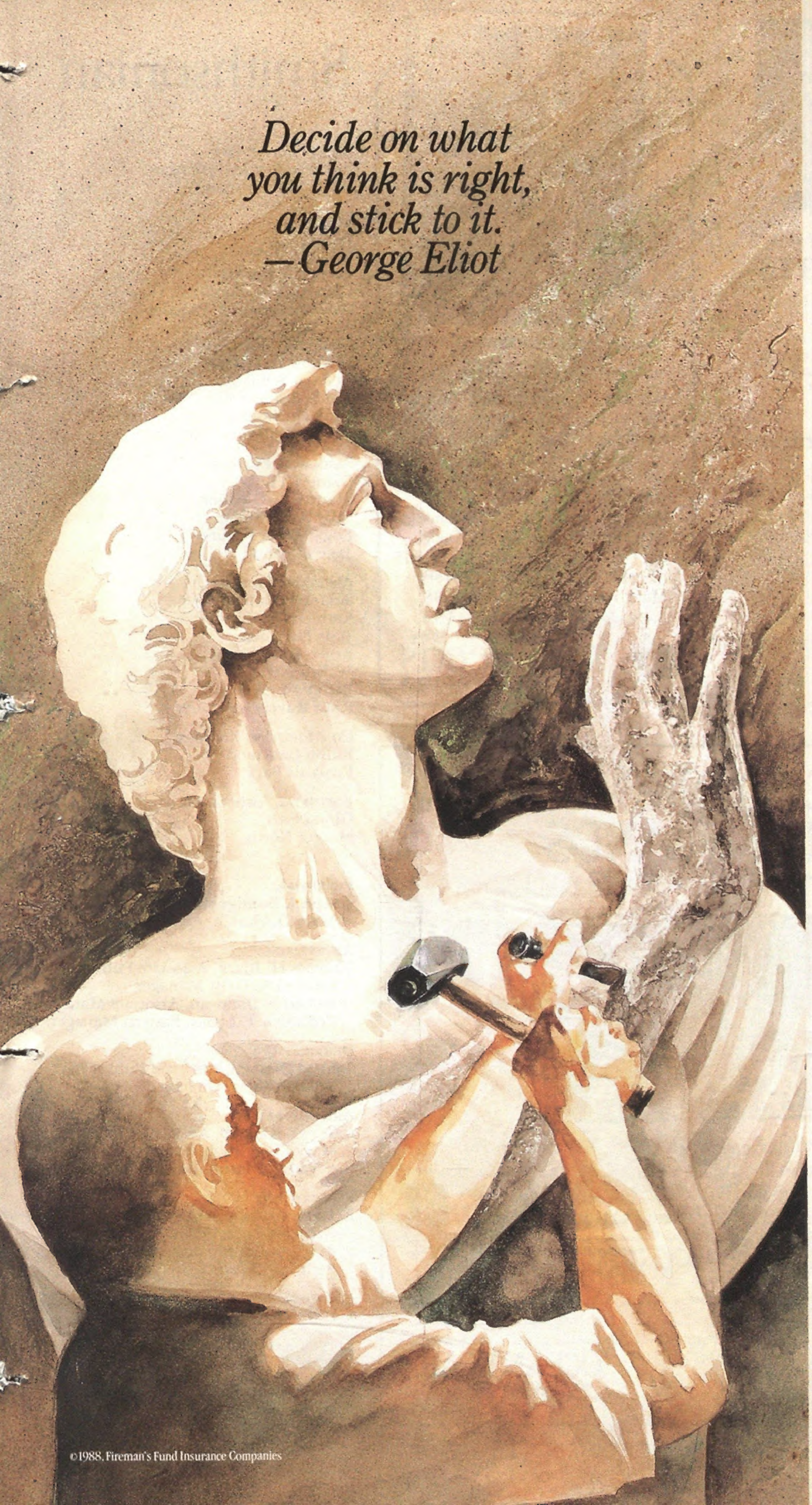

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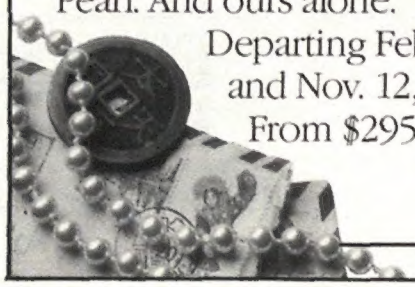

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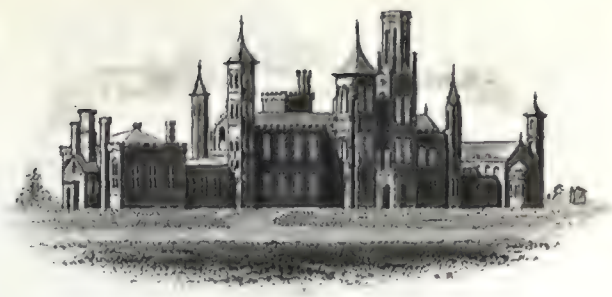


Smithsonian horizons

Our new awareness of changes taking place in the global environment may lead us to a more responsible future

This may become known as the year in which the global environment struck back at us. Drought in much of the American farm belt, a seemingly continent-wide heat wave, and an epidemic of forest fires together formed a syndrome of destructive climatic abnormality that has etched the past summer into countless memories. Then there is a syndrome of pollution: urban atmospheres consistently near or above approved levels of safety and tolerability, hospital wastes fouling our beaches, ships loaded with trash that wander across the world's oceans in search of a landfall for a landfill. Examples like these can be extended at your preference.

Although many may still prefer just to look forward to another winter, another year, and not think about such matters, there is a glimmer of hope in the fact that the convergence of environmental shocks seems to have produced a genuine shift in the climate of opinion. The weather anomalies have encouraged speculation that we are witnessing the beginning of a profound warming trend, bringing the implications of the well-established greenhouse effect (*Horizons,* August 1987) into media prominence and everyday conversation. As indeed they should, since the likely effect will superimpose within a century as much change as has occurred since the end of the last ice age, about ten thousand years ago.

Even the Antarctic ozone hole that has been caused by the accumulation of escaping chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) from our spray cans, air conditioners and other products, though more remote and much more recently demonstrated, has quickly reached a high level of public attention (SMITHSONIAN, February 1988). There are signs, in short, that we may have begun to consider the limits of the Earth's resilience as a habitable ecosystem with appropriate comprehensiveness and seriousness.

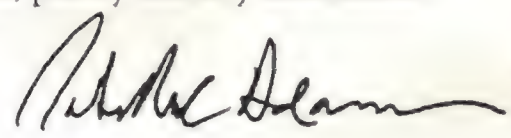
But turning vague concerns into constructive courses of action is something else again. First, it calls for recognition that we are dealing with very long-term problems. There will be no quick technical fixes or painless solutions. World agreement on slowly terminating CFC production is only beginning to take shape under American leadership, and these gases will still be accumulating for years—and actively destroying ozone in the stratosphere well over a century from now. Carbon dioxide, similarly, is being released into the atmosphere by fossil fuel combustion at a rate of several billion tons per year. We will do well simply to hold back the rate at which the world's demand for energy from fossil fuel rises, with no realistic prospect of seeing a reversal of the trend for years to come. While the oil-price shocks of the 1970s showed that conservation and efficiency measures can moderate and perhaps even prevent the rise, such measures tend to be capital intensive. As such, our deficit makes them a problem even for us—and places them beyond the reach of many newly developing countries.

An additional source of carbon dioxide of lesser magnitude, although with highly destructive environmental consequences of its own, is the burning of tropical forests to meet the subsistence needs of growing populations, to supply pasturage for cattle, and to provide access to marketable hardwoods. The cattle and hardwoods are largely destined for the voracious markets of the developed countries, which thus bear a heavy share of responsibility for a problem that is now common to all.

As a second course of action, we must recognize the inherent uncertainty and complexity of the challenges we face. No brief description can do justice to them, but even at the frontiers of scientific understanding most of the numerous feedback effects that have been identified (and many surely have not) are poorly understood even in isolation. In combination, their outcome is still harder to predict, at least with present mathematical models, and so might include runaway processes of change beyond those now envisioned. Thus the rate of change is as doubtful as it is in many ways critical. New or more efficient energy sources, for example, will require long lead times for development and adequate testing.

Third, we should beware of thinking only in terms of averages. Temperatures will change least at the Equator, most in polar regions, so that polar melting will create severe problems of coastal submersion. Climatic change in temperate latitudes, involving poorly understood interactions of changing temperature and precipitation patterns, will be critical for certain crops and agricultural zones and not for others. Climate is inherently variable, and oscillations of colder and warmer, wetter and drier weather will continue even if superimposed on a general warming trend. It is vital that we not set aside our concerns and regard the problem as overdramatized if next summer happens to be a relatively moderate one.

Making still more difficult our response to these challenges is the fact that they crosscut the traditional spheres of concern of government and international agencies. In a very profound way, we thus need to broaden both our administrative channels and our concepts of national security beyond their traditional, purely military dimensions.



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Letters to the Editor

Rails

Dear Sir: I settled onto my bed to read, with your August issue face up beside me. My 2-year-old Siamese cat decided to join me, but midway in his leap he looked down and noticed the black rail on the cover. His posture changed completely in midair, in a split second assuming the classical caricature of a frightened cat—arched back and upturned tail. He landed on perfectly straight legs, then proceeded to advance and retreat from the magazine, sniffing loudly. He had never acted this way before. I saw how real this picture was to him when he advanced far enough to extend his paw and forcefully swat the bird across the face. After two swats he tried to part the grass with his paws. When he had satisfied himself that the rail was no threat to him, nor could he get to it, he became disinterested and walked away.

Later, I showed him the cover again to see if it would elicit the same response, but having learned from experience, he displayed no emotion.

Karen Sue Cohen
Coconut Creek, Florida

Art Institute of Chicago

Dear Sir: Institute officials Martin Ryerson and Charles Hutchinson may have learned about the Demidoff sale through the French connection: William M. R. French, the first director of the Art Institute and founder of its school, was the brother of sculptor Daniel Chester French. Dan, who lived for many years in Florence, sent brother Will casts of famous works for the school in Chicago.

J. T. Miller
Littleton, Colorado

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Dear Sir: I note that on page 32 you have renamed Renoir's *Sur la Terrace* the *Two Sisters.* How did that happen?
Althea Hays
Champaign, Illinois
The painting, which has been known as Sur la Terrace *for many years, was first exhibited under the title* Two Sisters, *and so the Art Institute has reverted to its original name.* Ed.

Phoenicians

Dear Sir: I have spent a happy part of many summers on Ibiza's sister island, the smaller Formentera. Twenty years ago, one of the ferries that lumber between the two islands was called *Tanit.*

Among the delightful inhabitants of the islands are native dogs, known as Ibicenco hounds. Rough-coated or smooth, they resemble the stylized dogs seen on stelae at the far end of the Mediterranean. They have two other unusual features: ears that stand straight out from the crown of the head for about three inches before drooping, and a positive relish for conversation. An Ibicenco will chat, sing-song fashion, for as long as a human talks or sings to it. One summer I stayed in a tiny, isolated villa on Formentera and made friends with one of these dogs. He came every evening for fresh water I put out for him, then, thirst slaked, would hang his head over the knee-high windowsill to "talk" for half an hour.
Marylou Buckley
Boston

Dear Sir: Those Phoenicians were really ingenious! Even modern navigators would have real difficulty navigating by Polaris when south of the Equator.
John Day
Columbus, Ohio
The Phoenicians were able to navigate by Polaris and Kochab north of the Equator—the major portion of their voyage around Africa. Ed.

Dear Sir: Miss Hamblin's article states that until the building of the Suez Canal in 1869 there was no viable water route between the Mediterranean and the Red Sea. I believe you will find that a canal connecting the Red Sea with the Mediterranean was in use as early as 2000 B.C.

This says a great deal about the imagination and engineering skills of other peoples of the Near East. But that fact in no way detracts from the imagina-

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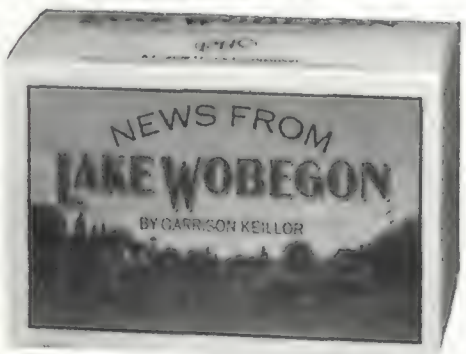

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Korea

Dear Sir: The photographs on pages 49 and 57 of your article show young women with not a button or a buttonhole among them. The beautiful traditional gowns of yesteryear were very carefully designed to be kept in place with strings, straps and ribbons. The scholar on page 56 is also kept decent by the same means, and his hat is carefully handwoven with black hairs from horsetails!

Reading the piece carried me back more than 40 years. After the Japanese surrender, I was the first American ashore at Inchon and also the first American in Seoul—where I enjoyed the first red meat in two years of island-hopping and eating C rations.

On October 10, 1945, orders came to my headquarters, the 148th Army/Airway Communication Detachment at Kimpo Field, a few miles south of Seoul, for a secret, high-security mission to Shanghai by C-47. I was to go along and make sure that communications were maintained. No mention was made as to the purpose of the trip so I inquired of the commanding officer, who replied that security regulations had been applied to the flight and no one was to know the details.

Two colonels, the command's best pilots, boarded the C-47. A navigator and myself were the only other crew. The flight to Shanghai, 500 miles across the Yellow Sea, was an uneventful three hours.

A little after 10 o'clock the next morning, several black cars arrived with an extremely large Military Police escort. Finally, about five women, five men and a boy dressed in very fine but plain native Korean costumes, and one gray-haired Korean in a business suit appeared. There were many sad and

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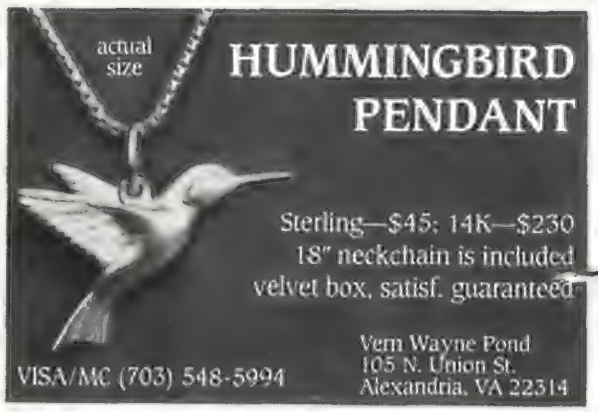

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tearful goodbyes before I finally locked the door and we taxied down the runway for takeoff.

I was the only American in the passenger compartment. The gray-haired man said to me, "I am Syngman Rhee; we are going home." The second half of the sentence was spoken with such feeling that it has rung in my ears ever since. Then 70 years old, he had spent 39 years in exile. When the jagged, mountainous Korean skyline appeared on the horizon, there were tears on the cheeks of every repatriate aboard.

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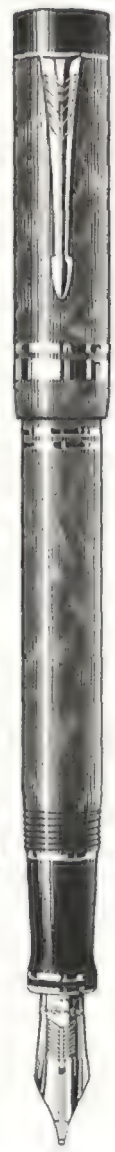

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Saffron

Dear Sir: I discovered the true versatility and splendor of saffron four years ago at a food show in San Francisco. I'd been familiar with—and hooked on—saffron in paella, but a light, moist, saffrony German tea bread sampled at that show brought me up short. Trying to duplicate it in my own kitchen aroused my curiosity about the history and harvest of saffron, and so, as did Diane Ward, I went to Spain to observe.

Later, my research indicated that saffron is in a class by itself, sharing characteristics of herbs and spices but not fitting neatly into either group, and led to my writing *Wild About Saffron*, a history and recipe book. One thing I have learned is that, like garlic, the rougher you treat saffron, the stronger its flavor.

In this country, the Pennsylvania Dutch appear to be the only ones who have used saffron extensively, mostly in chicken dishes, for the past 200 years. The rest of us seem to have used it mainly as coloring for rice. But I've found it to be one of the most versatile spices around, good in everything from breads to ice cream, soup to chops and more.

Incidentally, while saffron is techni-

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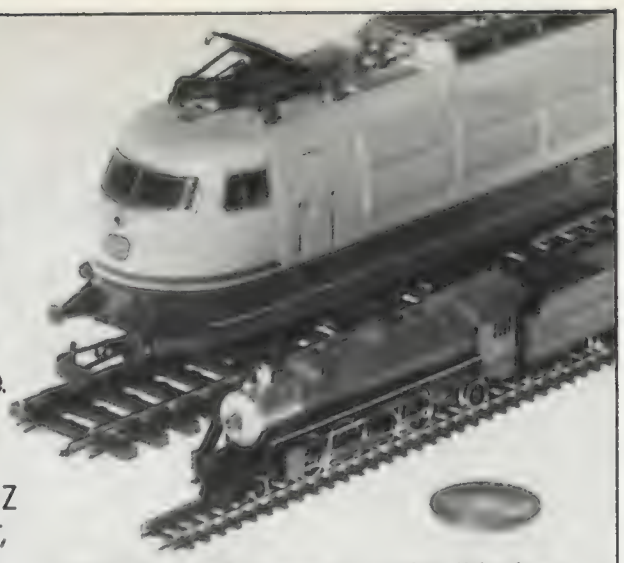

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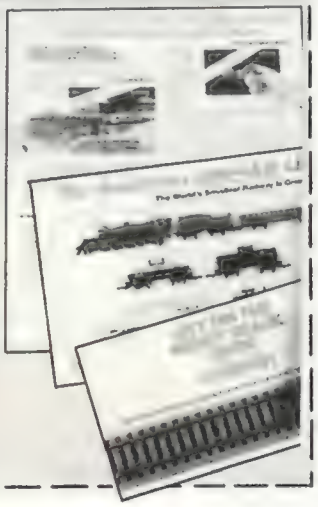

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cally the most expensive culinary ingredient by weight, it is not the most costly flavoring agent that I use. The cost per dish of, say, wild mushrooms, cardamom or butter can be far greater.

Ellen Szita
San Francisco

Phenomena

Dear Sir: As Mr. Wiley says, the workmanship of all those Willies and Freds and Joes is truly a fine art. Few, if any, of those guys will ever see the SMITHSONIAN article, so I will give my copy to the *bricoleur* who has enriched my life and revived my old Saab many times.

The *bricoleur* has NOT passed away; he is just a rare bird!

Janet H. Muder
Hubbard, Ohio

Roto Rooster

Dear Sir: The story of Roto Rooster reminded me of one of the most unforgettable characters of my childhood. Dukie, a handsome white Plymouth Rock rooster, reigned supreme in our backyard in De Soto, Missouri, in 1912, when I was 5 years old.

Dukie hated me—and for good reason. From my observations of what went on between Dukie and the hens, I was convinced that he was a tyrant and needed to be taught a few manners—although I must admit the hens seemed to adore him. I made it my mission in life to be the hens' protector and spent most of my time shooing Dukie off. He must have been the most frustrated rooster in town.

But Dukie had his revenge. Every time I went to the backyard privy, he chased me, even waited for me to emerge and chased me back to the house, scolding and flying at me. His spurs were lethal.

We had a telephone that hung on the wall in the dining room. Dukie loved the telephone. Every time it rang, he would race to the dining room door and start crowing lustily, making it impossible to hear what the caller was saying. And all the caller could hear was Dukie crowing.

We lost Dukie one fine autumn day to a band of gypsies. If they expected a succulent chicken dinner, they were sadly mistaken. Our Dukie was a tough old bird.

Eva B. Eaton
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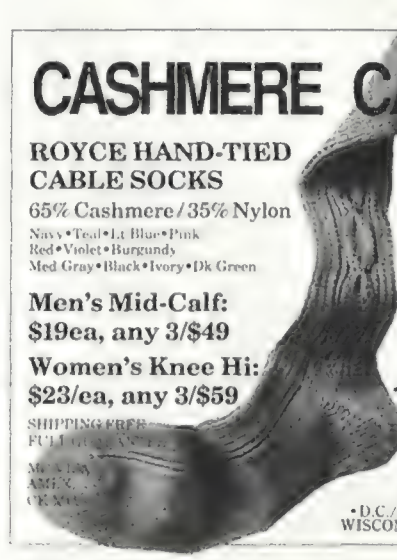

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Aside from interminable political campaigning (which used to be a lot more colorful, I gather from the story on page 148), Americans are doing some pretty good things on television this autumn. The World Series lifts us out of baseball's summer boredom and synthesizes all the best of the game—the twanging tension, devilish strategy, clutch heroics and elegant grace of movement. And though professional football has been all but "time-outed" to death, it still has moments of highly watchable splendor.

Another good thing is *Smithsonian World*, the Institution's public television series, which has won two Emmys. On the 24th of this month, at 8 P.M. Eastern time, it kicks off its new season, underwritten by Southwestern Bell Corporation.

The title of the first show is "The Living Smithsonian." When I heard rumors that it had to do with what goes on around the Mall and beyond, I got savagely territorial. Fangs bared, neck hairs all abristle, I stalked off, stiff-legged and snarling, to see what these television people were up to.

They were out on the Mall, all right. My Mall. The Folklife Festival had started, tents had sprouted like mushrooms and the air was filled with different sorts of music, so that you could ricochet from southern Russia to Massachusetts to Trinidad as the sounds lured you.

Smithsonian World was right in the middle of it all, its people setting up lights at the Festival Music Stage, rigging sound booms, lugging heavy cameras. I introduced myself testily and was received with that distracted courtesy with which you greet friends who show up at the worst possible moment. Some-

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one shoved a schedule in my hand and I noted that nine of the *Smithsonian World* people had been up in time for a 7 A.M. breakfast, that they had arrived at the Festival at 8:30 A.M. with a van and a truck, and that they were scheduled to shoot all day long until 6 P.M.

Nine people. A truck and a van. Thousands of dollars' worth of equipment. In the face of all this, my territoriality began to seem like the yapping of a small dog at Omaha Beach on D-Day. Anger was obviously useless. I adopted sulkiness instead.

Even that was hard to maintain as I met several generous and affable TV people who told me more about the projected show. The basic idea was to depict the Smithsonian not as a repository of millions of items, but as a living, vital organization.

OK. I go along with that.

Smithsonian World was seeking to do this by visiting a number of key Smithsonian people—"living treasures" doing their particular jobs at various parts of the Institution—and also some folk artists who add to our national culture. These people would interweave with the sounds and the fun of the Smithsonian's annual Folklife Festival, where all that diverse culture comes together on the Mall—the "front lawn" of the Castle.

Well, I guess that's OK when you've got a whole hour in which to get across an impression of the Mall. I only have about 1,500 words, which people can read in maybe five minutes.

Some nice people from the *Smithsonian World* office helped me sort out what was going on that day. I was given a tape of the show's audio. Sound without pictures was incomplete, yet it gave me a fairly good idea of how the program would evolve and what the TV crews had been doing up to the time I saw them. For they'd been filming bits of this kaleidoscope ever since snow flew last winter.

Gosh. I have to do most of my Mall columns in about four days. Less, when I'm running late.

I was told that Paul E. Garber would start things off by recalling the early days of flight, and how the Smithsonian got hold of planes like the *Spirit of St. Louis* and the Wright *Flyer.*

Garber. Of course. He's historian emeritus at the National Air and Space Museum and he knows everything about flight. I'm sure I've done Paul Garber sometime in the past 13 years. I'll look up my files and see.

Then the camera will come in on Gary Sturm, who manages the musical instrument collection at the Museum of American History. He'll say that beautiful antique instruments should be heard as well as seen. Nice line.

Now, I know I've done something about the Smithsonian Chamber Players putting on concerts with those wonderful old instruments. I just can't lay my hand on it right now.

We go to a recording session where the players use the five Strads that are at the Museum of American History, four on loan from Dr. and Mrs. Herbert R. Axelrod. We watch the famous cellist Anner Bylsma play the Smithsonian's own Servais, one of the finest surviving cellos made by Stradivari.

I remember writing about the Servais

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somewhere, but I have a terrible feeling it wasn't in one of these columns.

The show will take us to Louisiana to listen to Eddie LeJeune play Cajun music (SMITHSONIAN, February 1988). And we jump from there to Virginia to listen to John "Bowling Green" Cephas and "Harmonica Phil" Wiggins play Piedmont blues. From there, we go to Fort Peck, Montana, where we find the Badland Singers doing Dakota Sioux songs and dances.

Louisiana! Montana! I think it's a pretty big deal when I get sent out Connecticut Avenue to our National Zoo.

Bernice Reagon of the Museum of American History gives a fascinating and moving interview about the Smithsonian's black American exhibits. I wrote something about that, too, but I made the mistake of not interviewing Reagon.

And we listen to a concert of the old civil rights songs, with Reagon talking about the way it was. She's introduced as one of the original Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) Freedom Singers.

The show will jump to Fort Pierce, Florida (I did a column about that, some time ago), where curator Robert Higgins studies meiofauna, the microscopic creatures who live in aquatic sediments. Higgins tells us that a handful of wet sand may hold as many as 10,000 of them.

Higgins wasn't there when I was.

The show talks about—and with—Howard Finster, a 72-year-old preacher-artist-storyteller-banjo-picker from a little town in Georgia. He tells how, in the last church where he "pastored," he felt his congregation wasn't paying attention. They were just showing up every Sunday because he was familiar to them and it seemed like the right thing to do. So he got the idea to paint his messages.

Whoo, boy! He's new to me.

Back at the Festival on the Mall, the cameras will pick up the same tribal and folk musicians that we had met back on their home turf. We'll listen to them cut loose on the common ground they share with other folk artists, all in the shadow of the Smithsonian, which exists partly to bring these varied cultural roots together and explain them.

That's kind of neat. I should have thought of that.

It explained why, on this particular day, I was listening to Eddie LeJeune bring out his daddy's accordion and tell us that when he was 5 his daddy got killed by a car, and his grandmother used to play that accordion, and he grew interested and picked up the bouncy Cajun music. He and his group then ran through a set in regional Louisiana French, and people got up and danced in the tent under *Smithsonian World*'s bright lights, and the camera moved its big eye around, watching everything.

After that, Bowling Green Cephas and Harmonica Phil rolled their blue notes through the tent. And no sooner had they finished than the Badland singers and dancers came on with that relentless drumbeat and the jangle of ankle bells, and those falsetto notes rising and falling. Tom Vennum, Smithsonian ethnomusicologist, explains in the film that music is sacred to Indians; they have a song for everything: battle,

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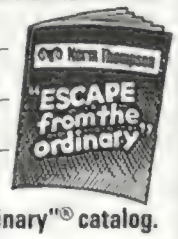

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death, grinding corn, returning home.

"At the very end, the Smithsonian people we've talked to appear on the Mall with the Festival as a backdrop," Adrian Malone told me, when I met him later. He's the executive producer of the series. Like the rest of that crowd, he seems really quite a pleasant sort of person. I suppose they may have just faked all that cordiality. You know—buttering me up so they could get away with trespassing on my Mall. But it seemed genuine.

I guess I'll catch that opening show on the 24th. After all, the World Series will be over, and the Monday-night quarterbacks in the newsrooms will have finished their critiques of yesterday's Redskins game against the Green Bay Packers. And the program seems to have quite a lot about what goes on around the Mall and beyond that I didn't . . . that I'd sort of like to look at.

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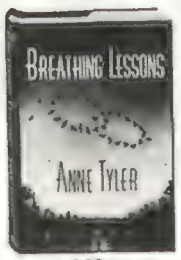

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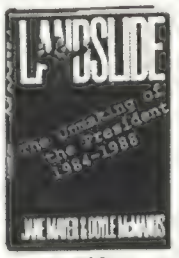

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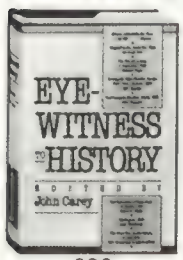

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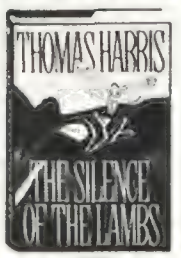

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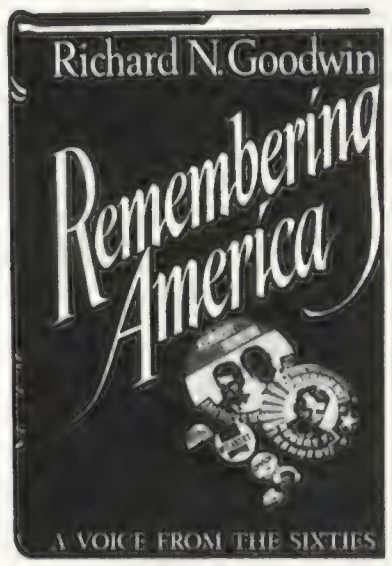

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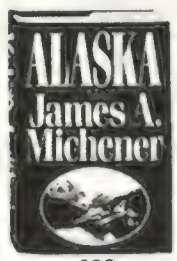

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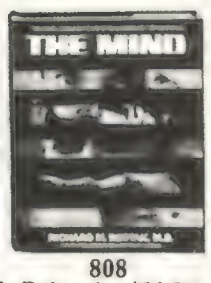

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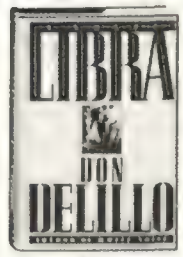

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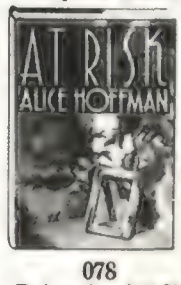

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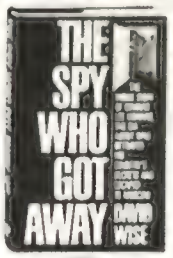

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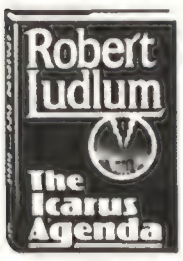

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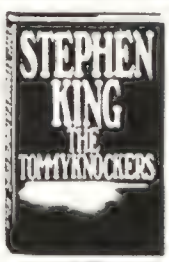

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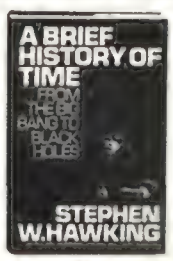

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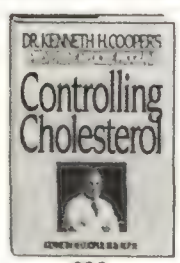

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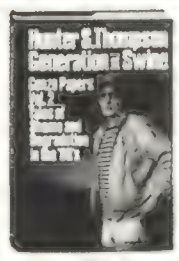

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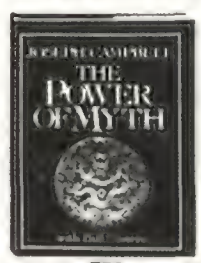

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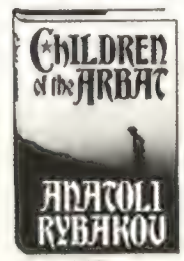

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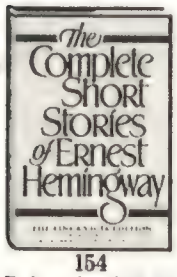

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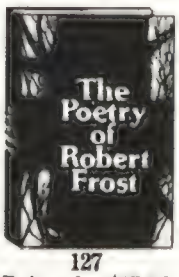

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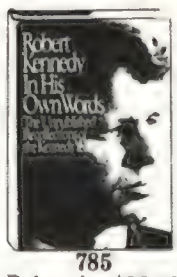

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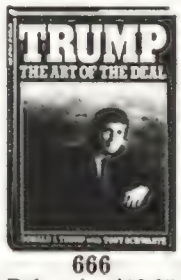

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Phenomena, comment and notes

Our "cavemen" ancestors can teach us something about avoiding the diseases of civilization that kill most of us

It had been a good day all around. The men had come back with enough meat for a week, easily carrying the 50-pound slabs from where their spears had brought the young caribou down. The women and small children had filled baskets with roots and nuts, not to mention a sprinkling of birds and rodents. The grandmother had found bushes drooping with the family's favorite berries; the two grandfathers had chipped out a whole arsenal of new projectile points. Now everybody had stuffed themselves; groaning happily, they headed for their beds of skins, falling asleep almost immediately. Soon there was no sound except an occasional pop from the fire and the cry of an animal in the dark beyond the rock overhang.

In the morning, traffic noise in the street below awakened some; others did not move until their clock radios turned on with reports of traffic snarls and fallen currencies. Water ran, coffee dripped, cereal rustled into bowls. Soon children headed off to school, men and women to their offices. On Saturday they would try to make the time to stop by the nursing home.

This sudden jump is not an old script from *The Twilight Zone*, a warp in the fabric of space-time. It is only another way of saying what author John Pfeiffer has pointed out in a number of articles for SMITHSONIAN: physically we are exactly the same as the people who were living very well, thank you, in Europe, Africa and Asia 30,000 and more years ago. Our culture has evolved so far and

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so fast that there would seem to be no connection between us, but physical evolution is a much slower business. Despite all our electronics and jet aircraft, symphonic music and deconstructionism, we are they.

For this reason, scientists are beginning to look—as well as they can—at how our ancestors lived: what they ate, how much exercise they got, what we would call their lifestyle. The idea is that if the human body evolved over hundreds of thousands of years to fit a lifestyle, then it behooves us to find out what that lifestyle was. Presumably, it is still optimal for us, who inhabit those very same bodies. Civilization has changed the way we live more in the last few thousand years than in the previous 500,000. Today the fortunate among us can dine in temperature-controlled comfort on fish flown in from New Zealand, fruit from Florida, wine from Europe. By exerting mild pressure with our right foot, we can zoom along the ground at 55 miles per hour (some, when their radar detectors tell them it is safe, move considerably faster). From our recliner chairs we can watch events on the other side of the world—as they happen. Nobody wants to go back to the cave. But are we losing anything in our headlong rush into a still more fantastic future? Are there costs to go along with all these benefits?

A new book, *The Paleolithic Prescription* (Harper & Row), suggests there are. It is the work of a troika at Emory University in Atlanta: S. Boyd Eaton is a radiologist; Marjorie Shostak, an anthropologist; and Melvin Konner, a doctor of both medicine and philosophy (in anthropology). They argue that for 100,000 generations, humans were hunters and gatherers, while we have been agriculturalists for only 500 generations, industrialized for a mere 10 and computerized for only 1. In the late 20th century we live in bodies adapted over the millennia to a way of life that no longer exists. The authors write: ". . . with genetic makeups essentially out of synch with our life-styles, an inevitable discordance exists between the world we live in today and the world our genes 'think' we live in still. This mismatch—referred to here as the discordance hypothesis—can account for many of our ills, especially the chronic 'diseases of civilization' that cause 75 percent of the deaths in industrial societies."

They examine all the available evidence and come up with ballpark averages for the Paleolithic diet. (That evidence consists of skeletal remains, especially teeth, and the diets of the few hunter-gatherer societies that survive today.) Some of their recommendations are remarkably similar to those we have been hearing from the government and private health agencies: eat less fat, salt and sugar; eat more fruits and vegetables. Our ancestors did eat a lot of red meat, but it seems that the meat of wild animals has only one-seventh the fat of our feedlot beef, and a lot of that fat is polyunsaturated. Even more interesting, the meat of wild game contains the same beneficial fatty acid that trendy consumers are now taking in fish oil to ward off arteriosclerosis (*Phenomena*, May 1987); our domestic meat supply has too little to measure.

Humans were as tall as we are, or even a little taller, for far more than a million years, the authors say. Only with the advent of agriculture were we

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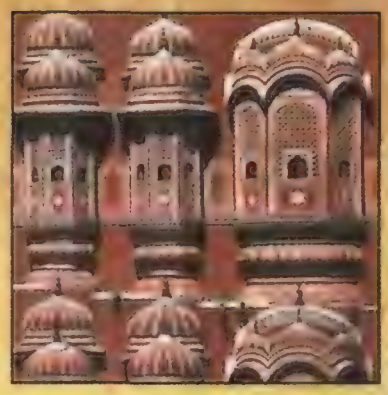

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"dwarfed"—a temporary nutritional setback we are coming out of in this century. We know from skeletal remains that from the earliest australopithecines 3 million years ago to truly modern people 30,000 years ago, our ancestors were much stronger than most people now alive. We know from their bones that the earliest modern humans, *Homo sapiens sapiens,* were as strong as our professional athletes today. Imagine a world in which today's decathlon champions would have been the norm!

We have even clearer evidence—ourselves—for the aerobic fitness of our ancestors. Endurance activities generate lots of heat in the body, and unlike most other mammals we are superbly adapted to dissipate heat. Our bodies are essentially hairless, and they sweat. Exposed skin allows heat to escape rapidly; the evaporation of sweat accelerates the process. We were born to run.

The three authors do not expect us to match the Aché Indians of Paraguay, who still chase deer until the animals drop from exhaustion. (A fellow anthropologist, himself a 10.2 sprinter in college, challenged a group of Aché men and boys to a 50-yard race: more than half beat him.) But they think we would be a lot better off if we spent less time in our cars or in front of the television set.

One of their most encouraging points is that we do not have to make radical changes to benefit. Take the business of walking as a way to lose weight. If you look up the tables, you may find you have to walk 36 miles to lose just one pound. Anybody who can walk 36 miles probably does not need to lose an ounce. But you don't have to do it all at once, the authors point out. If you were to start walking 20 minutes a day, and otherwise go on living just as you have been, you would burn an extra 100 calories a day. There are about 3,500 calories in a pound of body weight, so in 35 days you will have walked off a pound. In a year, you will be ten pounds lighter. A small number multiplied by a large one gives a large number.

What's good for individuals is also good for society. The negative benefit is the reduction in medical costs and lost production. The positive—and harder to measure—is the input to society of healthier, more energetic citizens, not only to the Gross National Product but to every part of life.

Additional benefits of healthier lifestyles could show up in unexpected places, again the result of small numbers

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being multiplied by large ones. Take gasoline. Think about the people at a shopping center who drive as close to the entrance as they can and wait, engine running, for somebody to pull out so they can park—all to avoid walking a few extra steps. (This kind of behavior really perplexes the three authors; let's hope they never find out I subsisted on rum buns and root beer while writing this column.) One car idling does not burn a lot of gasoline (a rough average is .3 gallons per hour). But let us say that in any given shopping center at any given time, two cars are idling, waiting for a good spot. And say this goes on for ten hours a day, seven days a week. In the nation's 30,600 shopping centers. All 365 days a year. If all those people would quit doing that, they would be just a little healthier—and the country would save 67,014,000 gallons of gasoline a year.

Or let's say that 40 million overweight people pick up on the authors' suggestion and walk 20 minutes a day. At the end of a year, they will have lost collectively 400 million pounds. As they drive their average 12,000 miles a year, their cars will burn a fraction of a gallon less because there is less weight to be moved. (Again as a rough average, for every 400-pound reduction in weight, a car will get one more mile per gallon.) The individuals involved save something like 70 cents a year. The country will save another 27 million gallons of gasoline. That in turn means less air pollution (which will make those slimmer individuals healthier still), an easing of our country's balance-of-payments problem and a stretching out of the world's petroleum resources.

It is night again. The stars coming out overhead are the same the mammoth hunters saw. The insect chorus is the same. Genetically, I am the same. (Culturally, of course, I would last about 20 minutes in the Paleolithic world: Where did they keep the automated-teller machines?) I am safe from most of the infectious diseases that killed them, less likely to be disfigured, disabled or killed by trauma. I worry instead about specters that they were largely free of: heart disease, hypertension, cancer, diabetes, obstructive lung disease—the degenerative diseases of our time. It seems a personal link across the eons that I could learn from the hunters how to avoid the killers of my era. That is time travel of the finest kind.

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By Edwards Park

A trove of artifacts from the land where Asia and North America meet

Helmet above, collected in 1802, wears a fierce human face. Ridge at the top was originally covered with fur.

From both sides of the Bering Strait come the extraordinary objects that make up an exhibition, 'Crossroads of Continents'

On August 7, 1987, a 30-year-old woman from California named Lynne Cox swam a bit more than 2.5 miles. That little workout was enough to take her from the New World to the Old, from North America to Asia, from the United States smack through the Iron Curtain to the Soviet Union, and from Friday to Saturday.

What Lynne did was brave the frigid waters of the Bering Strait. She crossed from Little Diomede, Alaska, to Big Diomede, Siberia, two islands that look at each other across the international date line and the boundary delineating Soviet and American waters. That puny gap between continents, always surging with vicious winds and currents, ice-choked in winter, fogbound in summer, isn't crossed as routinely these days as it was during the last ice age, when the lowered sea level exposed a broad land bridge. For some thousands of years, millennia ago, Siberians could simply stroll across to North America and settle down.

The bridge is gone, but not the connection

About 14,000 years ago, the bridge finally went out; tribes were separated. Today, Alaska Eskimos are related to Siberian Eskimos, and their cultures have developed in parallel on both sides of the Bering Strait. Trade links, however, produce many phenomena that continue to fascinate anthropologists. For example, Chinese—even European—themes crop up in designs on Siberian Eskimo clothing. And, because of contact across the Bering Sea, such influences often appear in Alaska as well. The area is still a crossroads.

Soviet, Canadian and American scientists have gathered, over the years, hundreds of artifacts and articles from this intersection of Arctic cultures. And the Smithsonian has been right in the thick of it. Now, at the National Museum of Natural History, 580 items from both sides of the Bering Strait are on display in "Crossroads of Continents: Cultures of Siberia and Alaska," the first exhibition ever to be put together jointly by museum curators from the Soviet Union, Canada and the United States.

On a steamy summer day, a few weeks before the "Crossroads" exhibit opened, I found curator William Fitzhugh, its project director, tucked into a typically crowded office in the anthropological section of the Museum of Natural History. He led me down to a sprawling basement room where the show was being put together—obviously a lengthy, demanding task. A sign on the wall neatly combined curatorial hope and despair: "The light at the end of the tunnel . . ." someone had written, and under it someone else had added: ". . . is an oncoming freight train."

Pulling out long, flat drawers, producing articles sometimes swathed in plastic, sometimes bedded down in cotton wool, Bill explained the sweep of the show

Photographs by Rosamond W. Purcell

through both time and space. Here was a beautifully shaped obsidian point, probably a spearhead, one of the earliest of the exhibit's Paleolithic tools. It may be, said Bill, as much as 18,000 years old, and though it came from Siberia, it's very similar to the Clovis tools of North America.

Fitzhugh dug out many other treasures now on display: a carved owl from Kodiak Island, a thousand or so years old; lip plugs of walrus ivory; a design that involved the head of an animal resembling a Chinese dragon; a woman's death mask with bone eyes, always wide open to keep the departed spirit from reentering the body. I saw harpoon heads decorated with feathers. I saw a house charm from Siberia, and hunting masks with long, wooden visors from North America. A suit of Eskimo armor—heavy walrus skin cut so that pieces telescoped into each other at the joints to allow movement—recalled the look of early Japanese armor.

The drawers held so much. I marveled at beautifully made model kayaks and umiaks dating from the mid-1800s, and at a boat pump that you worked by sucking with your mouth. And at the clothing: sealskin trimmed with dog fur, or with puffin bills, or with the neck skin of cormorants.

"You can see," said Bill, "why the people seemed strange to the first Europeans who saw them. Here they were, living in this bitter, godforsaken part of the world, and yet they dressed like royalty."

Almost sated by the richness of the collection, I turned to the story of those early explorers and found myself involved with one adventure after another. It seems that the world of grinding ice, bleak, barren islands, volcanic peaks and misty glaciers had drawn out eccentricities that lurked within the most disciplined and purposeful scholars who had been attracted there from Russia, America and many other countries.

Georg Wilhelm Steller came first. An arrogant young Bavarian, he sailed in the 1700s with Vitus Bering, the Danish explorer who scouted the northeastern coast of Siberia for Russia's Peter the Great. Siberia, wrote the Czar, "seems, in all probability (since we do not know where it ends), to be part of America."

Steller discovered, classified and collected a wealth of plants and animals. Steller's jay and Steller's sea lion were among them; also Steller's sea cow, a massive, four-ton manatee already close to extinction, whose meat tasted like beef. But his sneering contempt for the officers and crew of the ship set a new standard of bad behavior and in the end curtailed the expedition's explorations of the Alaska lands. Shipwreck, storms, sickness and the death of Commander Bering cut short the voyage. Steller did his best to save lives, but the wry fact remains that much of the bout of illness was due to bad water: the sailors had deliberately stocked it on board simply because the despised Steller had told them not to touch it.

Exploiters followed explorers. Fur traders soon took over Russian America (now Alaska) and their rapine and murder caused the Aleuts to rebel. The Russians ruthlessly squelched the uprising. One Russian leader is said to have lashed a dozen Aleuts, one behind another, in a straight line and fired his musket at the "leader" to see how far the ball would go. It killed nine.

The Smithsonian takes an interest

The United States was dickering to buy Alaska, "Seward's ice-box," when the Smithsonian first got into the act. Assistant Secretary Spencer Baird sent his best and brightest naturalist, young Robert Kennicott, to head the survey team of the Western Union Telegraph Expedition, which set out in 1865 to lay a cable across the Bering Strait to Asia.

A delightful, amusing man, Kennicott was the leader of the youthful scientists who in those days lived in the Smithsonian Castle ("We den in various rat holes about the building," he wrote). He was also experienced in the field, an old hand at collecting in northern Canada and Alaska. But he wasn't up to leading his section of the Western Union expedition, which had been organized along military lines (uniforms were required).

Like Steller, Kennicott quarreled incessantly with the company men, who looked upon the scientists as objects of derision. Distressed and depressed, Kennicott died of a heart attack on the job. He was 30.

Kennicott had recruited William Healey Dall as a naturalist for the Smithsonian, and it was Dall who replaced him as scientific leader. Dall called the expedition "one long, weary, fight," but he did valuable

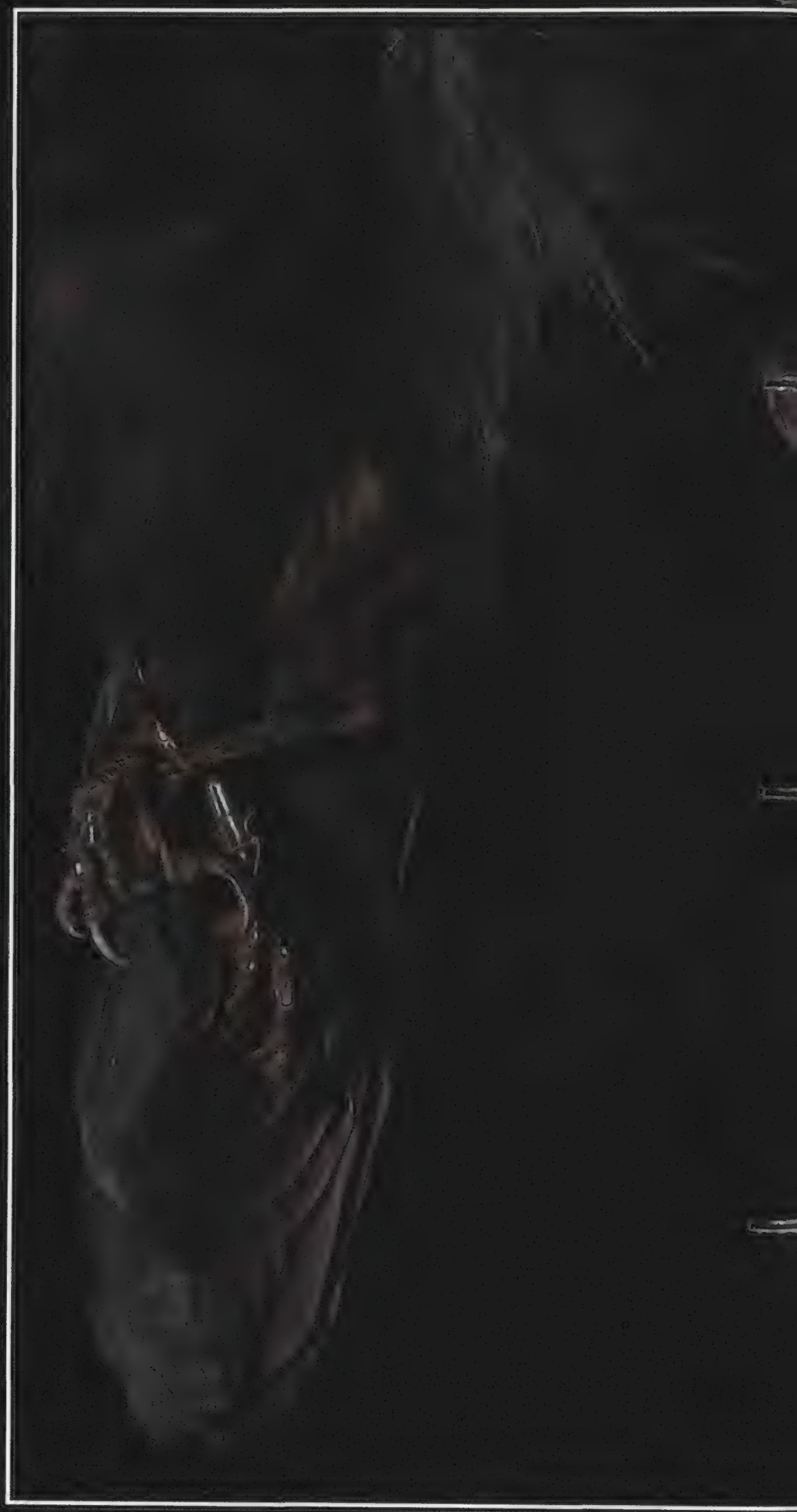
Text continues on page 53

Mr. Park, a Contributing Editor of SMITHSONIAN, *wrote about Australia's Bicentennial, January 1988.*

Beauty wrought in a bleak country

Here, ritual objects of the Siberian Koryak that were used on home altars. At the left is a sleek, sculptured whale. The dish above was kept full of water for the spirits of whales.

Four-inch sea otter charm made of walrus ivory was kept in kayaks of Bering Sea Eskimos. Marks represent otter's skeleton.



Wooden mask made by Point Barrow Eskimos is pictured beneath the wing of a bird that's common to Northern coastlands, the raven.

At top is a hunting-hat ornament of walrus ivory with jet eyes. It was made by the Ekven people of Chukotka, Siberia. Below it is widespread forked handle of an Athapaskan hunting knife. Half of a similar handle, this one from Canadian Eskimos, is at the right.

This miniature hunter was seated in a model of a kayak.
The Aleuts were the most accomplished among kayak builders.

Engraved bone, ivory pendants are from a Tlingit shaman's necklace, which gave him special powers.

Rear view of Koryak funeral coat made from the white fur of reindeer fawns. While the women sewed it together, the men played cards on the body of the deceased, laid out in the house.

Chukchi charm string from Siberia was worn around the neck in a leather pouch. It served to protect the wearer from bad spirits or misfortune.

A fearsome winged object made of walrus ivory is from Chukotka, Siberia. Seal whiskers may once have been drawn through holes.

From the left: a Northwest Coast shaman's baton; hanging from a lanyard is a divination guardian used by foreseers; below it is a shaman's paddle with grip contours on handle; a scraper used to deflesh and dehair animal skins; and a war club (c. 500 B.C.) from Prince Rupert's Harbour in Canada.

From Point Barrow comes a walrus-man doll with a wooden body, and ivory tusks and eyes. It may represent legendary figure who lived at sea bottom and could communicate with walruses.

work and shipped a small mountain of geological samples to Spencer Baird. Though the cable laying was called off, the expedition's scientists identified more than a thousand species of flora and fauna.

The collectors, however, didn't get far into ethnology. Dall was exasperated with the people of the Far North. In his recently published Smithsonian Press book, *Exploring the West,* historian Herman Viola says Dall disliked the Eskimos and Indians almost as much as he did the Russians, whom he found "worthy companions when sober . . . but intolerable when drunk. The Russians are *dogs,*" he complained to Baird in a moment of ire. "If you come up bring plenty of rum & you can buy their *souls.*"

In 1897, Morris K. Jesup, a financier who was president of New York's American Museum of Natural History, backed another expedition aimed precisely at studying the people on both sides of the Bering Strait. This project was the brainchild of Franz Boas of the museum's department of anthropology, who, unlike naturalist Dall, found the Far North's Indians and Eskimos fascinating.

The Jesup Expedition, said Boas, would determine once and for all whether American Indians had come from Siberia. That was a hot news story in the 1890s and Boas knew it. But he apparently felt it a foregone conclusion and seldom brought it up after the first announcement. He wanted instead to study tribal and cultural relationships.

Working off a personal grudge

Boas, called the father of American anthropology, recruited the expedition staff from both the New World and the Old World. He was determined to outdo the Columbian Museum of Chicago (later the Field Museum), against which he had a personal grudge. He was outraged when the Chicago people went on a collecting foray to Alaska's Northwest Coast the same year that the Jesup Expedition was launched.

The Jesup scientists studied such groups as Quinault, Salish, Chilcotin and Thompson in Washington State, Alaska and Canada. But it was on the expedition's Siberian front that the anthropologists faced problems that were far different from those the earlier Smithsonian naturalist-explorers had to contend with.

Thanks to a report on the Jesup Expedition written by Stanley Freed, Ruth Freed and Laila Williamson, we know something about the scientists that Boas sent off to the Asian Arctic. Because the Siberian area was immense and dangerous Boas decided on three teams to cover it. He picked Berthold Laufer, a German who was a brilliant Asian linguist, to lead the anthropological work along the Amur River, which forms the northern border of Manchuria.

Laufer was delighted to accept the post, but Russia's Czarist government wasn't thrilled: Laufer was a Jew—anathema to the regime. A great deal of string-pulling and arm-twisting by the U.S. State Department produced a personal appeal to Grand Duke Constantin, president of the Imperial Academy of Sciences, and Laufer got his visa.

He first settled north of Japan at Sakhalin Island, which divides the Sea of Japan from the Sea of Okhotsk. There he stayed for eight months among tribes that included the Ainu, early inhabitants of Japan. He traveled by horse, dogsled and reindeer sled, once barely escaping death when he cracked through the ice. On the mainland, Laufer moved along the Amur River, where he suffered from springtime insects, then heat and, above all, loneliness; also from a shortage of money. He wrote Boas, "Nothing is free here except death, which you can have in this country at special bargain rates." He survived his Siberian adventure, however, and moved to New York where he taught at Columbia. Later he joined the Field Museum.

Another member of the Jesup Expedition was Gerard Fowke, a Kentuckian who was self-taught. He and two companions explored some 330 miles of the lower Amur in an open boat. He wrote of timber that looked like a Michigan tamarack swamp "after a forest fire succeeded by a hurricane," of grass up to seven feet tall, of clouds of mosquitoes.

Meanwhile, in northern Siberia, Boas took on two Russians, Waldemar Bogoras and Waldemar Jochelson, at $100 per month. Both were described as intellectuals, which meant that they were revolutionaries. They had been exiled to Siberia and knew their way around. The Czar, 30-year-old Nicholas II, took a dim view of their political activities, but ended up writing "To Whom It May Concern" letters indicating his support for their work in the field. The trouble was, he also sent a message to the police, asking that they "establish a secret surveillance" over the two Waldemars.

Measles among the Eskimos

Bogoras and his wife, also a scientist, stayed along the far northern Anadyr River with reindeer-herding Eskimos, who were suffering a measles epidemic. Bogoras studied the language, collected, photographed, then dogsledded down to the Kamchatka peninsula, risking his life in the hazardous journey and nearly losing it to influenza.

Jochelson and his wife, Dina Brodsky, found that measles had also decimated the Koryak, whom they had set out to study. They traveled through terrible country, "bogs, mountain torrents, rocky passes and thick forests," with provisions rotting from rain, and

horses wearing out. Reaching the Korkodon River, they built a raft, and braved rapids and short rations to beat the fall freeze. The pair put in time in one of the Eskimo underground dwellings, and Jochelson described its smoky squalor in a letter to Boas: "The odor of the blubber and of refuse is almost intolerable; and the inmates, intoxicated with fly agaric [a mushroom], . . . are infested with lice."

Despite all this, the Jochelsons collected 3,000 artifacts, took a mass of photographs, made casts of faces, filled phonographic cylinders with sounds and took the measurements of nearly a thousand individuals. He published important monographs and she earned a doctorate, wrote about women in Siberia and became a physician. After the Russian Revolution, they came to live in the United States.

When Bogoras started writing up his work for Boas, he found that his troubles were not over. He began in good faith when he got back to St. Petersburg, but revolution was breaking out all over. In 1905, guards at the Winter Palace fired on some demonstrators—and Bogoras was right there. "You will understand," he wrote to Boas, "that an epoch like this happens only once in many centuries."

Boas didn't understand any such thing. "I fully appreciate the excitement of the present time . . ." he replied, "but . . . an investigation by Mr. Bogoras of the Chukchee happens only once in eternity."

Still the Russian held out, his letters to Boas filled with revolutionary fervor: "The blood is flowing, the best blood of the country." Finally Boas got a cable: "Am arrested, reasons unknown."

Fortunately, Bogoras' friends were able to bail him out. He did produce 5,000 artifacts, texts, casts, records and measurements from the expedition, and wrote seven monographs. He stayed in Russia, where eventually the Revolution turned him into a bureaucrat assigned to look after those same Siberian tribes.

About a third of the items in the exhibit are from the Soviet Union's Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography in Leningrad and from the Sakhalin Regional Museum in Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk. Most items have never been shown before. The Canadian Museum of Civilization in Ottawa, the Field Museum and two Alaska museums have loaned nearly 60.

The Smithsonian has contributed about half of the display, collected by anthropologists who followed naturalists to Alaska; one of them, Edward Nelson, shipped to Washington about 10,000 specimens dealing with ethnography. Leonhard Stejneger, Ales Hrdlicka, James G. Swan, George T. Emmons, Dale Stewart and notably the late Henry Collins were to carry on the collecting tradition of Kennicott and Dall. Bill Fitzhugh and others continue it. "We retreated from the Far North for a while," says Fitzhugh, "but now we have Congressional support for a permanent Arctic program. My mouth is watering."

The remainder of the "Crossroads" artifacts—I

Life masks made in 1926 of Eskimo woman and man were used for faces of mannequins in "Crossroads."

counted about 100—are from the American Museum of Natural History. These, of course, include the results of the Jesup Expedition as gathered by both Russian and American anthropologists. The assembly of articles from both sides of the Bering Strait displays, for the first time, North American objects that have been held by the Leningrad museum, and Siberian material that has been on American and Canadian shelves.

The exhibition remains at the Museum of Natural History until April 2, 1989, then goes on tour. Seattle, New York, Indianapolis, Anchorage and Ottawa are among the scheduled stops. Moscow, Leningrad and other Soviet cities are on the agenda for the early 1990s.

Franz Boas would be pleased. So, too, might all those who struggled and fought and snarled at one another and worked themselves to death in that bleak land.

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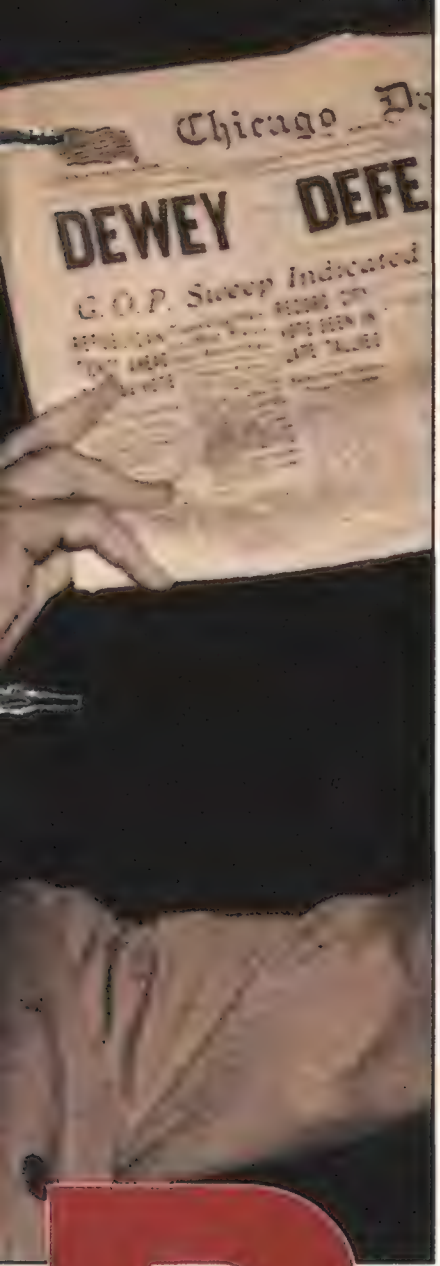

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By Israel Shenker

A painter with heart, in the guise of a misanthrope

Acerbic, lonely and filled with self-doubt, Edgar Degas lamented, "I felt myself so badly made"—but his canvases near perfection

Degas made many self-portraits, revelatory and pitiless, but no talent could convey the original. Master of the deft riposte, witty, ironic, humorous, sardonic and willfully cantankerous, he dueled skillfully against hypocrisy and the pompous. When asked if his exhibited landscapes were states of the soul, he replied, "States of the eyes. We painters don't use such pretentious language."

On canvas and paper he transmuted the dross of everyday vision into a vibrant world, but he never pronounced it good. "I must thoroughly realize that I know nothing at all," he wrote in one of his many notebooks. "It is the only way to get ahead." Craving perfection, determined to let nothing interfere with the labor of creation, he stood apart, guarding his independence and privacy: "If you want to produce art seriously and make a little corner of originality for yourself, or at least keep for yourself a thoroughly guiltless personality, you must immerse yourself in solitude." He reacted fiercely to invasions of his privacy. "Is painting done to be looked at?" he demanded. "One works for two or three friends who are alive and for others who are dead or unknown. Is it any business of journalists if I make pictures, boots or cloth slippers? Painting concerns one's private life." To a young woman who had been spreading stories of a good nature concealed beneath outward appearance, he expostulated: "What's this I hear? You're saying everywhere that I'm not bad, that people are mistaken about me? If you take that away, what will I have left?"

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

Spacious yet tightly composed, *At the Races in the Countryside* is also portrait of Paul Valpincon family.

He said he wanted to be "illustrious and unknown," but art and artists were both in for it: the doleful pleasures of celebrity spared neither, and the end is not yet. After three months at the Grand Palais in Paris, and a similar performance at the National Gallery of Canada, in Ottawa, a vast retrospective of the world according to Degas will be at New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art from October 11 through January 8.

One of Degas's first essays on theme of racing scenes depicts parents, children and dog in their carriage.

Art too delicate for transport or too sensitive for prolonged exposure to light was withheld from the rigors of the threefold presence, but close to 275 works have been displayed at each site—a core of some 185 hardier specimens that traveled to all three, in addition to works gathered for each museum show. The exhibitions have been supported by United Technologies Corporation, and the selection presided over by Jean Sutherland Boggs, the Canadian art historian. Gary Tinterow, a curator at the Metropolitan, joined her in scouring the Degas landscape and sharing an infinite capacity for taking airplanes. One day they had breakfast in Stuttgart, were in Hamburg for lunch and spent the evening in Düsseldorf, all the while conjuring works by Degas from reluctant lenders.

The gathering from more than 70 museums and

galleries, and 90 private collections was a kind of apotheosis with a vengeance for an artist who—for all his success—had organized only a single one-man show in his lifetime. To encumber him further, Paris sponsored a scholarly symposium of leading Degas experts. Columbia University professor Theodore Reff called Degas "the most intelligent and original artist among all of [the Impressionists]," and Douglas W. Druick, from the Art Institute of Chicago, marveled at the artist's "power of invention." "His contribution was quality," suggested Gary Tinterow, and spoke of a "cruel objectivity touching on satire."

In the artist's own day, Impressionist Camille Pissarro maintained that Degas "constantly pushes ahead, finding expressiveness in everything around us," and called his friend "the greatest artist of the period." "What a gap between Degas and all the others!" he exclaimed. Years later, artist Raphael Soyer called Degas "the deepest artist of his group, . . . a profound psychologist. . . . The works have a kind of finality."

Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, Williamstown, Massachusetts

Early in career, Degas portrayed himself wearing an artist's stained white smock and a soft hat.

The object of this admiration entered the mortal stage of his life in Paris in 1834—billed as Hilaire-Germain-Edgar De Gas. His father, Auguste, headed the Paris branch of the family bank based in Naples; Auguste's father had fled to Naples from the French Terror in 1793, after his fiancée was guillotined. Auguste, who was born in Naples, married a Creole from New Orleans and presided over a bourgeois household. An enthusiast for art and music, he played the organ in church and patronized musical gatherings.

After a rigorous classical education, son Edgar abandoned the study of law in favor of art. His father remonstrated, and finally surrendered. Degas—he alloyed the "De" with the rest of the name, explaining that he wanted to work, and aristocrats didn't work—studied at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts and under a former pupil of Ingres, the renowned neoclassical artist. Determined to master the skills of the great, Degas assiduously copied their works at the Louvre and in the print collection of the Bibliothèque Nationale. From age 22 he traveled in Italy, keeping a journal, studying and copying. Perhaps the greatest copyist of all time, suggested art historian Sir Kenneth Clark. But Degas also tried his hand at carefully prepared original portraits of his relatives as well as of himself—with high brows surmounting a long, thin, bearded, somewhat idealized melancholic face.

"One Paris laundress is worth it all"

In the tradition of the Old Masters, rather than painting directly from life, he first sketched and drew. His work probed not only for revelatory physical detail, but for the relations of sitters to one another, the loves and tensions that united and distanced, the architecture of a gesture, the gleam of intelligence, the erosion of time and toil.

When Paris was besieged in the Franco-Prussian War, Degas served as a volunteer in the unsuccessful defense of Paris. In 1872 he left to visit his brothers, who were in the cotton business in New Orleans. To a friend he wrote: "Everything is beautiful in this world of the people. But one Paris laundress, with bare arms, is worth it all for a pronounced Parisian like myself."

Back on home ground he painted laundresses at work, women ironing, realistic depictions without sentimentality or glamour, largely in the somber tones that marked the prevailing fashion. The flashing silks, the sleekness and movement of horses, attracted him at the racetrack, and he sketched and painted jockeys and their mounts. Backstage at the Paris opera, Degas became a familiar at ballet classes and rehearsals. Enchanted by movement and by the heavy lassitude of exhaustion, he captured the fleeting artistry of motion, the dreamlike atmosphere of choreography, seizing on

Musée d'Orsay, Paris

Degas worked on this domestic scene, *The Bellelli Family*, throughout the course of several years. When finished in 1860, it remained with the family, but Degas got it back for repairs, then managed to keep it.

the reality and illusions of each moment. Here were dancers not only performing before an audience but withdrawn from public view, tying a slipper, adjusting a shoulder strap, yawning, slumped in weariness. "When all the muses meet together, they dance," said Degas the aphorist.

He took to frequenting and portraying popular café concerts—the contrived splendors of brightly costumed, full-throated, miming performers beguiling audiences of Parisian devotees; he painted scenes at the milliner's, and drew prostitutes in bordellos, shunning eroticism in favor of coolness and clarity—heavy figures seen without cheer or favor. "Like a fruit tree exposed to the sun, the artist must be totally exposed to life," Degas suggested. "To produce good fruits he must stand with arms outstretched, with mind open, assimilating all that passes, all that surrounds him."

Degas joined fellow artists—such as Manet, Monet, Pissarro, Renoir, Cézanne, Fantin-Latour and Sisley—in café discussions of art and its coteries. "Painting is not at all difficult when you don't know anything about it," he allowed. "But when you know, oh, it's something quite different." He suggested that in speaking about art "among people who understand, words are not necessary; you say 'humph,' he, 'ha,' and everything has been said."

Since the official guardians of art stubbornly refused to understand, and barred innovative artists from showing at the annual Salon, the café revolutionaries decided in 1874 to present their own rival exhibition. Degas helped organize it and shared the ridicule it

Israel Shenker contributes frequently to SMITHSONIAN, *most recently on Giacometti in last month's issue.*

Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mellon, Upperville, Virginia

Degas's *Little Fourteen-Year-Old Dancer*, though instantly appealing today, was a critical failure in 1881.

roused. One critic spoke of "impressionism" and his coinage quickly gained currency.

Author-critic Edmond Duranty, one of the café regulars, a friend of Degas, explained what the Impressionists were up to: "They have tried to render the walk, motion, hurry and intermingling of passers-by just as they have tried to render the trembling of leaves, the shimmer of water and the vibration of air drenched with light, just as they have managed to catch both the iridescent play of sunshine and the soft envelope of cloudy skies."

Successive exhibitions by the artists called Impressionists increased their renown and advanced their acceptance. When formerly critical artists began adopting Impressionist techniques, Degas remarked: "They shoot us down and then go through our pockets." At the last exhibition, in 1886, Degas showed pastels described in the catalog as "nudes of women bathing, washing, drying, rubbing down, combing their hair or having it combed." He had installed a bathtub and basins at home, and told one visitor: "The nude has always been represented in poses which presuppose an audience, but these women of mine are honest, simple folk, unconcerned by any other interests than those involved in their physical condition. . . . It is as though you looked through a keyhole."

It was by no means certain that Degas—with all his sympathy for colleagues—belonged to the Impressionist ranks. This was a man too imbued with the richness of the past, too concerned with recognized values, to entrust himself wholeheartedly to the impulsive dictates of nature and the fleeting moment. "Instantaneousness is photography, nothing more," he said.

Painting is like committing a crime

"All of Degas's work is serious," suggested the poet Paul Valéry. "As light, as playful as it may appear, his pencil, his pastel, his brush are always controlled. His will dominates." Noted Degas: "A painting is an artificial work, beyond nature, which demands as much cunning, malice, and vice as committing a crime." "Of inspiration, spontaneity, temperament, I know nothing," he maintained. "What I do is the result of reflection and study of the great masters."

While colleagues urged artists to forsake their studios and paint in the open air, Degas contended that one did not have to step outside the door to paint a landscape: "A green pea soup with three old wooden paintbrushes in it is enough material to paint all the landscapes in the world. The other day [Henri] Rouart painted a watercolor at the edge of a precipice. Is painting, then, sport?" Degas said that if he wanted to draw a cloud he could crumple his handkerchief and hold it up to the light. "If I were in the government,"

Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, Williamstown, Massachusetts

No artist better portrayed the world of ballet than did Degas, as evidenced here by *The Dancing Lesson.* He wrote: "The dancers have sewn [my heart] into a bag of pink satin . . . faded like their dancing shoes."

Private collection

The technique for *Dancer Onstage with a Bouquet* was complex and involved pastel chalks, a medium in which Degas excelled, applied on top of a monotype print with patches of the paper showing through.

Art Institute of Chicago

Pastel on paper, *The Morning Bath* is one of series of boudoir scenes, intimate in detail and observation.

he suggested, "I would have a brigade of gendarmes to keep an eye out for people who do landscape from nature. I don't want to cause anyone's death; I would insist they load with bird shot to begin with."

His aversion to painting in open air was partially the result of impaired vision that was painful in harsh sunlight. Partly because—as he thought—of exposure to cold during his service in the Franco-Prussian War, his eyesight grew progressively poorer. But he struggled to continue drawing and painting even when one eye was completely blind and the other almost useless. And he continued to roam the streets of Paris, hardly able to distinguish objects in his path.

Degas was the artist of artificial light in studio, opera, café, concert. From Impressionism he drew the lesson of freer, more rapid drawing, but remained faithful to the notion of painting from memory and imagination. He advised that an artist should observe his model on the first floor and then go up to the second to paint. "It is all very well to copy what you see," he noted. "It is much better to draw what you see only in memory. Then you get a transformation in which imagination collaborates with memory. You reproduce only what has particularly struck you—in other words, essentials. There your recollections and your fancy are freed from the tyranny of nature."

"A painting is first of all a product of the artist's imagination," he insisted. "It must never be a copy. If he can afterward add two or three accents from nature, obviously that will do no harm. The air we see in the pictures of the Old Masters is not the air we breathe." John Rewald, the art historian, suggested, "He observes without painting, and paints without observation."

The artist as workaholic

Degas repeatedly returned to the same model, drawing ever closer to illusory perfection. "I want nothing but my own little corner, where I will dig assiduously," he wrote a friend. "Art does not expand; it repeats itself." "Do the same subject over again, ten times, a hundred times," he counseled. "Nothing in art must seem to be an accident, not even movement." When he showed a friend a drawing by Ingres of a woman's hand, he said "That's my idea of genius, a man who finds a hand so lovely that he will shut himself up all his life, content to do nothing else but indicate fingernails."

Influenced by the vogue for Japanese art, Degas concentrated on novel perspectives; he rejected the conventions of composition and the tyranny of the frame—a figure could seize hold anywhere on canvas or paper, and be cut off at any point. He became an enthusiast of photography and enjoyed posing subjects for

She loves him. She loves him not. She loves him. She loves him not.

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Musée des Beaux-Arts, Pau

In 1873, while on visit to maternal relatives in New Orleans, Degas painted *Portraits in an Office.* Depicting the family business of cotton brokering, it was the first of his works to become part of a public collection.

his camera. Printmaking obsessed him, and he experimented with lithography, monotype, engraving, etching, aquatint and drypoint, always seeking to innovate. An acquaintance described him as "no longer a friend, a man, an artist [but] a zinc or copper plate blackened with printer's ink. . . . He now is in the metallurgic phase." Degas festooned his notebook with ideas for prints: "On smoke. Smoke of smokers, pipes, cigarettes, cigars, smoke of locomotives, of tall chimneys, factories, steamboats, etc. Smoke flattened under bridges. Steam . . . On bakeries . . . Lovely curves of dough. Still lifes with the different sorts of loaves, big, oval, fluted, round, etc. Color essays on the yellows, pinks, grays, whites in bread. Perspectives on lined-up loaves . . . Cakes, wheat, mills, flour, sacks, the market porters in Les Halles." He advised himself, "Work a great deal with the effects of evening, lamps, candles, etc. The provocative thing is not to show the source of light but the effect of light." He applied pastel to his monotypes, treated pastel almost like oil, layer fixed upon layer, and he combined oil with pastel, gouache, tempera, watercolor, ink, pencil, charcoal. Eventually he all but abandoned oil in favor of the quicker pleasures of pastel.

Perplexities multiplied. After the death of his father it turned out that one of Degas's brothers had been speculating in cotton futures and owed a great debt. Degas and a second brother decided to preserve the family honor and pay the debt. Suddenly Degas was no longer the artist with an assured, easy income, but—like many of his colleagues—obliged to scrabble for money. He moved to cheaper premises, engaged models who would cost little or nothing, and sought to promote the sale of his works.

Unlike many of his colleagues, Degas did not have to wait for posthumous revisionism to attract collectors. He grew wealthy enough to amass a stunning collection of art by others—El Greco, Tiepolo, Corot, Ingres, Delacroix, Daumier, Manet, Gauguin, Cézanne, van Gogh, Pissarro, Whistler. At auctions he would bid for works he could barely see, turning to friends for confirmation of his impressions. One of his own canvases sold for the highest price ever achieved up to that time by a living artist—$95,700. He had sold it originally for $100. Congratulated on the high price paid for his work, he said, "I'm like the horse that wins the Grand Prix and is given a bag of oats."

Partly because of his failing eyesight, Degas began painting in larger format, with bolder strokes, and spent more time at sculpture, a medium in which he excelled and in which he had begun to work in the late 1870s. One astonishing figure—the only statue he ever exhibited—was a dancer of 14, in wax, face tinted, wearing a wig, real clothes and slippers. Renoir called him "the only sculptor since Chartres."

Like a true artist, however, Degas repeatedly de-

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Nasjonalgalleriet, Oslo

A later work, *The Coiffure*, 1896, is remarkable for free and bold use of color, and untouched canvas, a method he liked to use. In addition to technical innovation, the picture is notable for the sense of emotional weight it holds, unusual for Degas's work.

spaired of his talent and accomplishment. "I stored up all my plans in a cupboard and always carried the key on me," he wrote, adding doggedly, "I will keep busy, as people say who do nothing, and that is all." He went on working—in his own words—"accomplishing nothing, finishing nothing."

It may have been his recognition that art demanded total devotion that kept him from marrying. "I have been reflecting . . . on celibacy," Degas wrote a friend, "and three-quarters of what I've been saying to myself is sad." To another he maintained, "A man should marry. You don't know what the solitude of old age is like." When he was asked why he had not followed his own advice, he replied, "I was too afraid of hearing my wife say after I had finished a painting, 'That's a pretty thing you've done there.'" But he was perfectly prepared to throw dust on the trail: "The dancers have sewn [my heart] into a bag of pink satin, pink satin slightly faded, like their dancing shoes."

Degas railed against architects, politicians, "thinkers" and "progress." On being introduced to the telephone, he said: "You mean when it rings you answer it? Like a servant!" "One sees what one wants to see," Degas said, "and this falsehood constitutes art." An incorrigible epigrammatist, he called work "the only possession one can always have at will," and described education as the activity that made a man "unfit for any number of occupations by which he might earn his living." His thoughts overflowed even into poetry.

In public, Degas assumed what a friend called "a mask of insensibility." To those he loved—nieces, nephews, a few others—he was amiable, even charming, but he could be cutting as well. He wrote one friend: "I was or I seemed to be hard with everyone through a sort of passion for brutality, which came from my uncertainty and my bad humor. I felt myself so badly made, so badly equipped, so weak, whereas it seemed to me that my *calculations* about art were so right. I brooded against the whole world and against myself. I ask your pardon sincerely, if with the pretext of this damned art, I have wounded your very intelligent and fine mind, perhaps even your heart." Valéry said Degas was "one of those men who do not feel they have done or accomplished anything unless they have done it against themselves." Pissarro called him a "terrible man, but frank, upright and loyal."

Swayed by the passions of the Dreyfus Affair, Degas became virulently anti-Semitic, broke with old Jewish

friends like Pissarro and Ludovic Halévy, the celebrated librettist. One of his last pictures is said to have been a self-portrait with sunken eyes and shaggy white beard. "I look like a dog," he said. In 1912, when his rented house was sold and he was forced to move, friends found an apartment for him, but he never summoned the energy to unpack the boxes that contained his collection. He died in 1917, having told a friend that he wanted no funeral oration. "But if there has to be one . . . get up and say 'He greatly loved drawing. So do I.' And then go home."

Degas's brother René did not love all of the drawings, and may have wantonly destroyed about 70 of the brothel scenes. Some 150 crumbling pieces of statuary were rescued from the studio and 74 statues were cast by a founder. In 1955 almost all the original waxes were discovered in the cellar of the founder's house—the foundry foreman had made duplicates to use for the bronzes. Left behind also were about 2,000 pages of notebook drawings as well as 500 pages of notes. A series of auctions dispersed the works of other artists that Degas had collected with such interest, as well as those of his own, hoarded by the man considered the greatest draftsman of the 19th century, a portraitist of genius who belonged to no school, but who pioneered an enduring course.

Master of design and space, Degas put his powers into play in *Racehorses*, done between 1895 and 1900.

National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa

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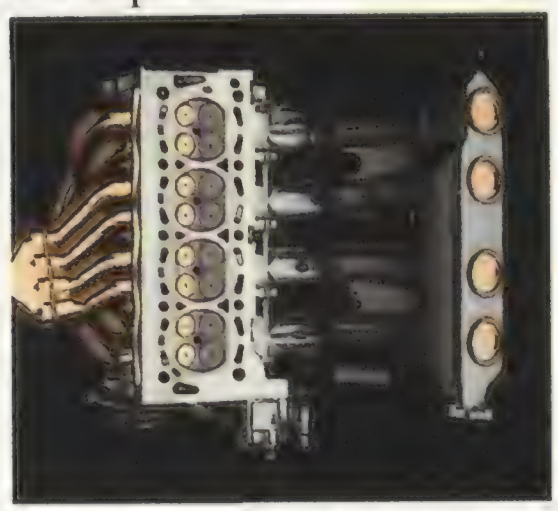

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PEUGEOT
NOTHING ELSE FEELS LIKE IT

By Richard Conniff

Shall we clap for the enduring *Mus musculus*?

Love 'em or hate 'em, treasure or annihilate 'em, these tiny creatures are everywhere that we are and, furthermore, they are here to stay

If you had gone to the Orange County Fair in California a while ago, and picked your way past the funnel-cake booths and the sideshows ("Giant Steer—10,000 Hamburgers on the Hoof!"), you might by sheer good luck have met a comely music and mathematics teacher named Roxanne Fitzgerald. She was surrounded by small cages at a booth in the livestock shed, and she wore her heart on the brim of her sailor's cap, which was embroidered with the words: "What's Nice? Rats and Mice!"

Yes, and you would have met plenty of people who agreed with her, or disagreed only about which was nicer. At this particular outing of the American Fancy Rat and Mouse Association, mousers were in the majority. They had assembled, amid the champion long-eared rabbits and bantam reds, to show their prizes—hairless mice, frizzy mice, long-haired mice, Siamese satins, orange satin selfs, agouti standards—and to discuss the fine points of the mousing life.

You might, for instance, have heard Don Fredriksen, a boat carpenter, lamenting his wife's distaste for agouti mice, which have a rather mousey gray-brown color. She lets their 9-year-old son, Josiah, keep a Chinese water dragon (a lizard) in his bedroom, Fredriksen was saying, but agoutis "look like house mice to her and she doesn't want 'em around." You would have seen much sympathetic nodding.

And you would have heard the mice themselves discussed with a discernment, even a delectation, that was utterly foreign to the everyday eek-it's-a-mouse world. Indeed, at that moment, Debbie Prosser, the show judge, held a lilac long-haired satin in her open palm as if it were a jewel. She ruffled its coat gently with a finger to check for thickness and evenness of color. A stern, meticulous judge, she had already sent a hairless mouse away from the judging table for having unsightly tufts on the tops of its feet; and she had marked down a silver tan because its nose was too pointy and its whiskers had been chewed off. But Prosser had also been sensitive. At one point, she cupped a listless mouse in her hands and held it up to her ear, as if to hear its confession. "When they have respiratory problems, you can hear them wheeze," she explained. And looking into the eyes of another contender, she said, "You're a *very* nice mouse, you just don't compete. I'm sorry."

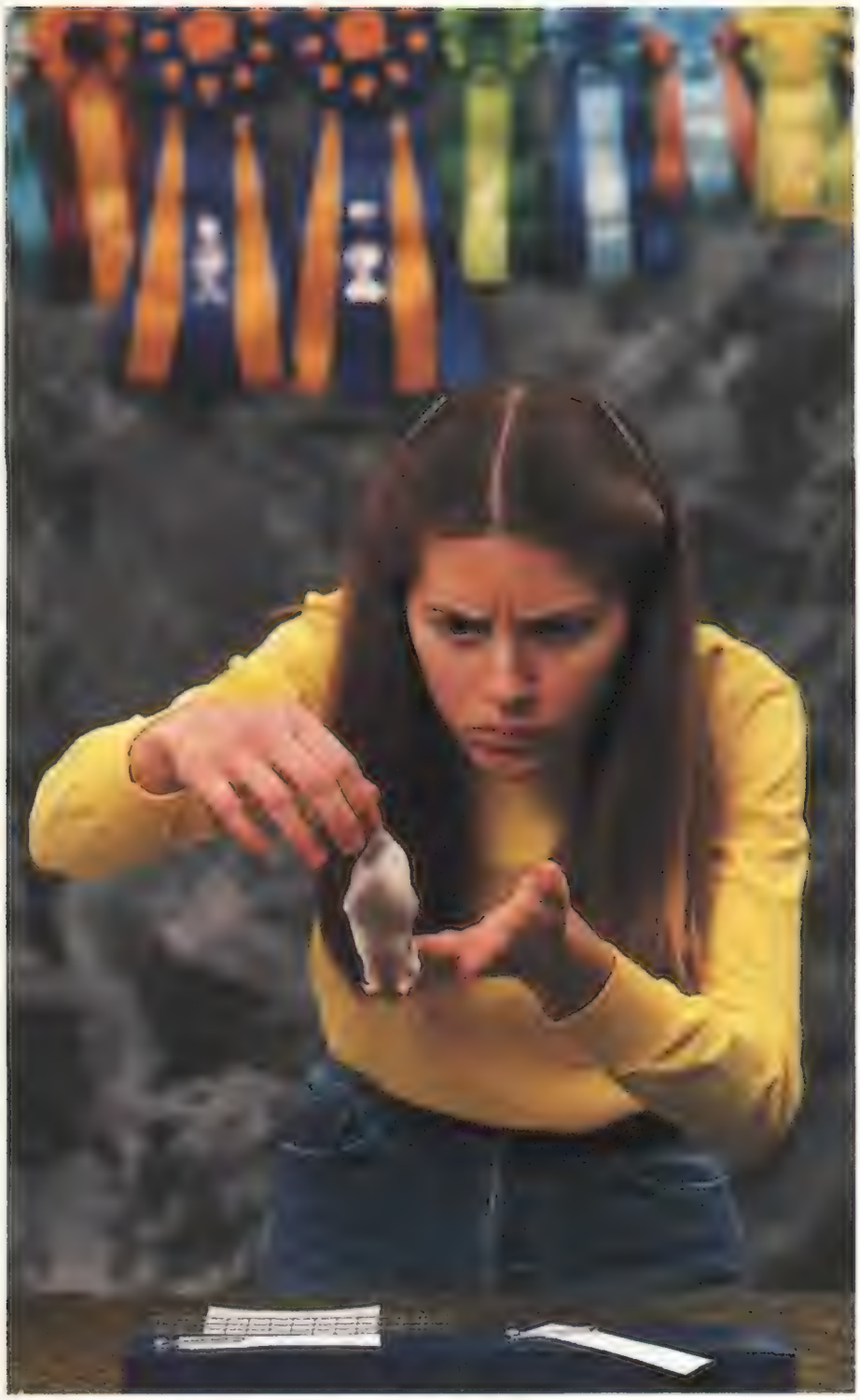
For the mice who *do* compete, the day culminates in the best-of-show judging, when Prosser holds up her choice and declares, "That's the ideal mouse, right there." The winner belongs to young Josiah Fredriksen, and it is an agouti. "That's great," Josiah's dad says to the small group of onlookers (his wife not among them). "He's been up on the table a couple of times before, but that's the first grand championship he's had." He hesitates, then inquires, "Should we clap?"

Perched atop the comfy cork of a Dijon mustard jar, a house mouse in Sussex contentedly chews on a biscuit.

A highly improbable success story

A very good question. Should we clap for the mouse? Should we clap, that is, for the *house* mouse, which is what we are talking about here, whether in plain or fancy versions, whether gutter-born or grand champion? There's no need for you to be a "musophile" . . . a "sminthophile" . . . a lover of mice . . . to consider the question seriously. Whether we like them or not, mice are a hit, an improbable success story, if only in that they have distributed themselves more widely across the planet than any other mammal apart from Homo sapiens. They have done it with short legs and bad eyes, too, and with less help from us than we generally choose to think.

The house mouse hasn't merely traveled far, it has learned to live almost everywhere, adapting its modest physical endowment to an extraordinary range of habitats. House mice live at the bottom of English coal mines and at the summit of Mauna Kea, an extinct volcano in Hawaii. They live in the coastal deserts of Peru and 15,000 feet up in the Andes. They dwell in frozen-meat lockers, snuggling in the carcasses that feed them. In Australia, where a few centuries ago they



Karen Hauser judges 1987 Fancy Rat and Mouse show, checking underside of silver satin for abnormalities.

were unknown, house mice have made themselves the most-common small mammal everywhere. And they have managed to colonize an island near Antarctica where even humans are too sensible to live. They reside, finally, in the walls of this writer's house and nest in my shredded tax records. The Bible says the meek shall inherit the Earth. The house mouse is living proof that they already have.

So do we clap? The question is complicated by a curious paradox. While humans have lived with mice for millennia and while we have studied them in endless detail as scientific models for ourselves, we remain ignorant about mice as mice. Even the aficionados of the Fancy Rat and Mouse Association are more interested in mouse esthetics than in mouse behavior. Nor do more than a handful of researchers care about where they came from or how they live. Mice, one mammal researcher told me contemptuously, "aren't real animals."

This ignorance is even odder because mice are a subject about which humans harbor deep and contradictory feelings. A mouse, like no other animal, can evoke in an instant both keen empathy and the urge toward cold-blooded mayhem. We think of mice as cute little critters—those anxious, hyperthyroid eyes, the fanlike ears, the nostrils sampling the air so frantically they seem to oscillate. But we also call them vermin and make a beaten path, as Ralph Waldo Emerson said, to the door of anyone who comes up with a better way to kill them. So if we are deciding whether or not to applaud the mouse's spectacular success, we had better think about the tangled ways humans view mice, and also about mice from something like a mouse's perspective.

Mice with snowshoes, mice with fur

One of the first tangles has to do with just what qualifies as a mouse. Any small, furry rodent will do, for some people, and hundreds of species fit that description. There are pocket mice, pygmy mice and fat mice, leaf-eared mice and striped-grass mice, American harvest mice and dormice. Australia naturally has kangaroo mice, but so does New Guinea, and neither species has much connection with the kangaroo mice of the American West, which are equipped with snowshoes. (For that matter, the American kangaroo mouse is no relation to the American jumping mouse.) The Middle East has porcupine mice. Southeast Asia has marmoset mice (also known, less winningly, as Asiatic climbing rats). And in South America, chinchilla mice are trapped for their warm fur, which is used to make garment trimmings and even whole robes.

Grouping these animals together under the common rubric "mice" is a bit like mixing beavers and guinea

Heather Thompson shows off Laya, Best Frizzy Satin, Best Pet Mouse ("nicest, healthiest, friendliest").

Curled in Challenge Trophy, broken-marked long-haired named BBWLH7 must win twice more to keep it.

pigs. Scientists class them in different genera, different families or even different suborders of Rodentia. Nor does it entirely simplify the question to talk only about house mice. In this country, for instance, deer mice are among the most abundant mammals in almost all habitats. About 50 species are native to this hemisphere and predate the arrival of humans. But they will sometimes live indoors, too, and it will afford little comfort to householders who hear them scrabbling under the floor to know that they are not, scientifically speaking, house mice. No, it is necessary to simplify the discussion further to those small furry rodents that have climbed into humanity's back pocket and made themselves our companions full-time and in all places, the members of the genus *Mus* whose name is thought to come from the Sanskrit verb "to steal."

Mus (rhymes with cuss) is the house mouse proper, and as such it has insinuated itself not just into almost every corner of the planet, but into our culture. The Greeks spoofed *The Iliad* in a satire about a one-day war between mice and frogs, with great orations before battle and with the gods butting in on both sides. They also built a temple to Apollo Smintheus (Apollo "the Mouser"), their protector from infestations of mice, and Pliny reported the use of white mice to augur the future. If they had augured right, they would have seen a future of superhero mice to whom millions of children would sing their allegiance. My generation was raised on Mickey Mouse and Mighty Mouse ("Here he comes to save the day. . .") and my 5-year-old now dotes on Danger Mouse, the James Bond of rodents. My father grew up with Ignatz Mouse, a dyspeptic, comic-strip ne'er-do-well who was always hurling bricks at his willing target, Krazy Kat (SMITHSONIAN, November 1987).

What all these representations say about mice is that we tend to mistake them for humans. We seem to like mice, and to empathize with them, at least in part because they are so thoroughly subject to capricious fate. One moment their lives are the picture of domestic tranquility, the very next a garter snake engorges Number 34 son, or an owl pounces on Mama. The scene is particularly affecting when capricious fate arrives in the form of ourselves, as on the infamous day in November 1785 when Robert Burns drove his plow through the nest of a "Wee sleekit, cow'rin, tim'rous

The author's "liberal education in rodentia," acquired living near the Connecticut River, will be basis for Minor Horrors, *a book about odd, despised creatures.*

A young saw-whet owl does its part, helping control proliferating population of the jumping mouse.

Cautiously eyeing toothsome morsel in a trap, mouse is faced with eternal dilemma: to eat or not to eat.

beastie." Mice lead lives of chronic instability and routine disaster; they tend to remind us, when they turn up cat-mauled on the front stoop, that we do, too.

But beyond that, mice have pluck. They have a way of carrying on, of getting by, even as the world crumbles daily about their ears. Forced to abandon one cozy home, they quickly set up another and another—and they survive. An 1859 report mentions a barrel of biscuits which had been sealed in Aberdeen and opened in the Canadian Arctic more than 14 months later; it contained a live mouse. One might ask, who (except the people who wanted to eat the biscuits)

Spilled wheat is manna to busy bevy. Profligate feeders, mice ruin at least as much grain as they eat.

could help but admire the mouse's heroic persistence?

Until recently, most scientists who bothered to think about it believed that the house mouse originated in the Russian steppes, and then freeloaded its way westward as a stowaway in the caravans of migrating humans. But it appears now not to have been that simple. Some scientists say that what we call house mice are, in fact, several separate species, *Mus domesticus* and *Mus musculus* being the principal. These two species went their separate ways one million to three million years ago, and they developed their essential characteristics well before humans settled down to an agricultural way of life. They developed, in other words, as "real animals" and we need to see them that way—rather than as mere appendages to human civilization—to understand how they have spread out and colonized the world.

Mice apparently never came to a great turn in the evolutionary road where they had to throw in their lot once and for all with human beings. Commensalism seems to have occurred repeatedly, randomly and not always permanently. Scientists use the term "fortuitous

It seems to be their preferred food, although in a pinch they will settle for most anything available.

Wriggling through a hole no bigger than a quarter, *Mus domesticus* easily earns the sobriquet "snake hips."

Through the ages, mousers like this farm cat have been celebrated in song and story by a grateful humanity.

preadaptation": mice were already accustomed to some feature of the environment, such as rock crevices, which later made it easier for them to live in barns and houses. Mice certainly required none of the sacrifices cats made, for instance, in submitting to domestication. The ease with which house mice can go feral even now suggests that they remain much the same animals as their distant forebears who were unacquainted with Homo sapiens.

As to how early house mice dispersed themselves through the Old World, they may have walked. Richard Sage, a researcher with the University of Missouri-Columbia, has studied the two predominant species at a hybrid zone where the demarcation of their ranges corresponds closely to the present-day border between East and West Germany. *Mus musculus* dwell from there eastward to Southeast Asia and Japan. *Mus domesticus* inhabit the Mediterranean countries and Western Europe, as well as the New World—where they arrived with the colonists. Their common point of origin is unknown. But Sage theorizes that after the last glaciation, the two species may have repopulated the northern countries independently, *M. domesticus* coming up via Morocco and Spain and perhaps colonizing some areas on the heels of us humans. It is even possible that in some places humans moved into the mouse's cave, rather than vice versa. Mice simply had the sense to recognize a good thing when they saw it. If they had got far on their own, they were to get even farther as new worlds were opened up to them by agriculture and human migration.

But fortuitous preadaptation to human company doesn't completely explain how these creatures of distant and unsavory origin got to be where they are today

(i.e., in the walls of my house, and probably yours, too). To understand why house mice are so successful almost everywhere, we need to know more about how they live. Their system of social organization is, curiously, both deeply isolationist and, at the same time, conducive to colonizing brave new worlds. Much of our knowledge of this system comes from Peter Crowcroft, an English researcher who spent part of his career in a darkened, windowless room figuring out what the mice around him were up to. Though his assignment was extermination, Crowcroft liked mice. He was inclined to settle down among them on the floor, and he sometimes sat still for an extra 20 minutes while a mouse "had a nap between my trouser leg and me."

Crowcroft's working method was to introduce various combinations of mice into the room, which was set up with a grid of nest boxes on the floor, then to watch what happened. In one early instance, having allowed a mouse named Bill to become established, Crowcroft introduced another male named Charlie. "I was quite unprepared," Crowcroft later wrote, "for the stark savagery with which Bill hurled himself upon Charlie in the first instant of their meeting." Far from being the "cooperative little fellows" Crowcroft had expected, mice were acting like "savage individualists."

There are perks for being top mouse

But for all their ferocity, mouse fights seldom resulted in death; they tended to be played out according to set patterns of behavior, culminating in the dominance of one mouse over another. And just to make sure the subordinate mouse got the point, the dominant one chased him every time they met. As Crowcroft introduced additional mice, a social hierarchy developed. Charlie fit somewhere in the middle, subordinate to Bill but dominant over other mice.

Other researchers have found that the important privileges of rank accrue only to the top mouse. A dominant male mouse engages in urine marking, for example, far more than do subordinates, and his urine is qualitatively different. Since mice communicate largely by scent and can distinguish individuals on that basis alone at a distance of up to seven inches, this sort of thing means a lot. Male mice are generally unimpressed by the urine markings of a subordinate, but steer clear of areas that have been marked by a dominant mouse. Females, on the other hand, will hang around areas marked by a dominant male.

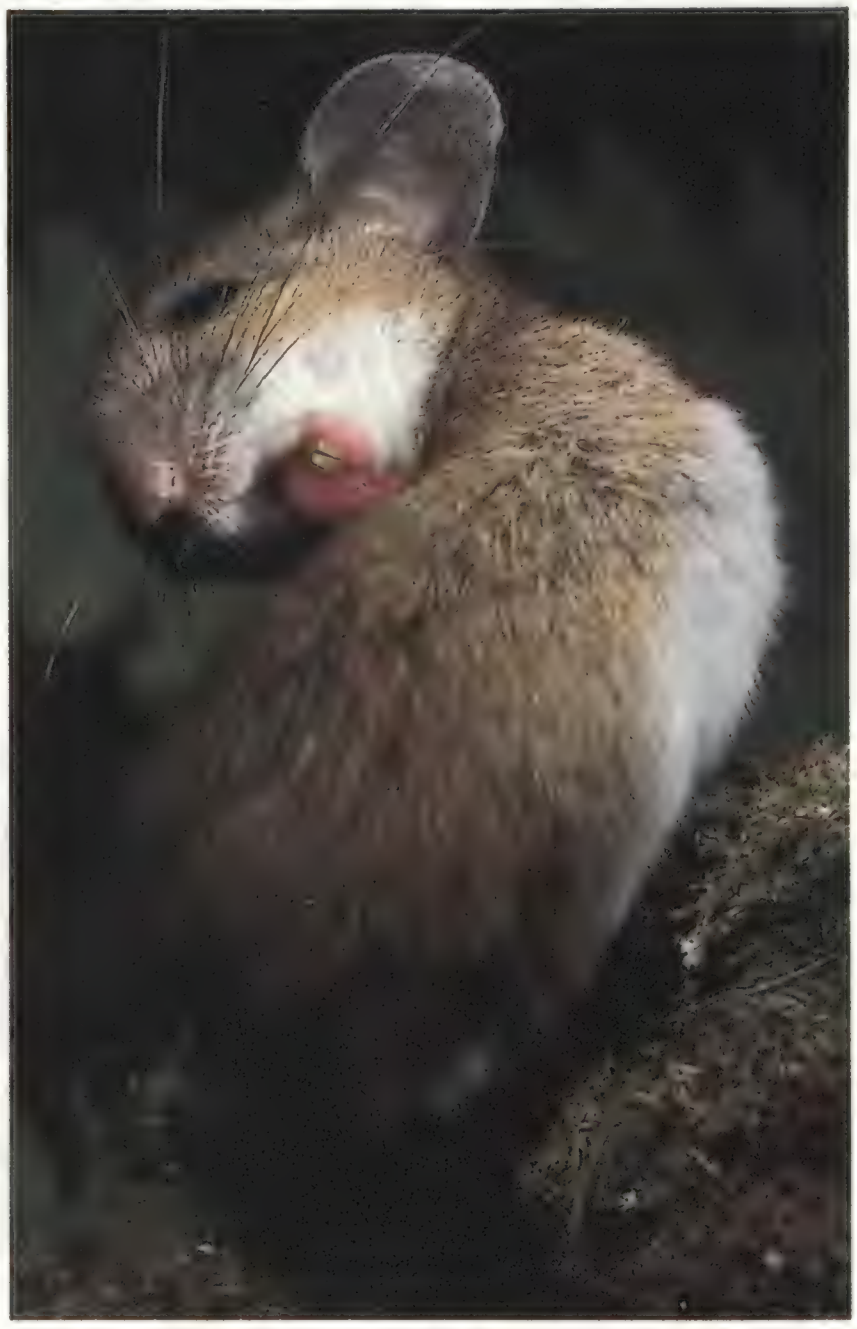
Researchers now regard small, hierarchical groups with a despot like Bill at the top as the typical social organization for mice. Indeed, within Crowcroft's room, several such groups occupied and defended small territories, separated by a no-man's-land. These little mouse autocracies do not have vast territorial ambi-

Widespread in North America, deer mouse is mainly nocturnal; when frightened, it can be a good jumper.

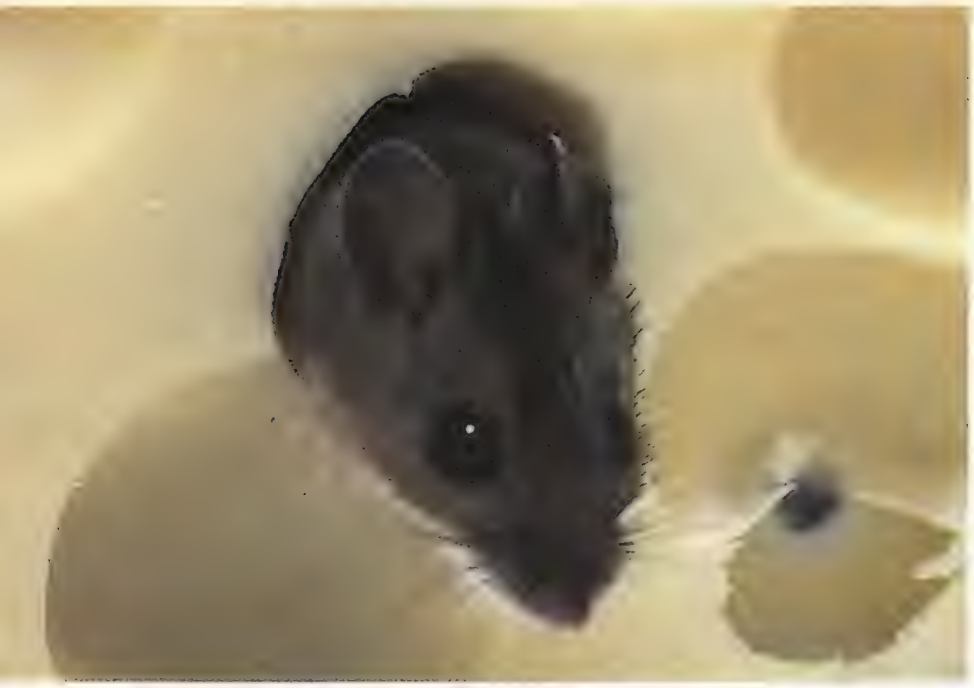
Chomping favorite food, carnivorous grasshopper mouse will also eat other insects and even smaller mice.

The vegetarian meadow mouse, also called a vole, puts away near-equivalent of its weight every 24 hours.

Silky pocket mouse, equipped with slits on underside of jowls, packs seeds through them into cheek pouches.



White-footed mouse must be a contortionist to groom itself; adults also spend time grooming their young.



If you can't eat it, live in it. This mouse finds itself dwarfed by a handy shelter of Swiss cheese.

tions; mice are, if anything, contractionists rather than expansionists. If food is readily available, they may confine their movements, after an exploratory stage, to an area of a few square yards. Haystacks, even side by side, typically harbor separate and isolated groups.

However small it may be, the territory puts its mark on the mice. They travel their home range continually and come to know their routes not just by sight or smell, but internally (or kinesthetically) as a sequence of muscle movements; they will, at first, jump over an obstacle even after it has been removed. The whole group defends its borders with a ferocity seldom seen in their internal squabbles. When a dominant male is absent, pregnant females will defend savagely the group's territory. Yet, juveniles and females can freely cross into another group's territory, while an adult male trying to join a neighboring group risks death.

At first glance, none of this would suggest that the mouse—this bickering homebody—is well suited to colonizing new worlds. What makes it even more improbable is that mice combine isolation with inbreeding, and somehow parlay this apparent recipe for feeblemindedness and debilitation into an evolutionary advantage. Because the dominant mouse in a group does most of the mating, his genetic traits spread through the population. This process quickly results in neighboring communities of mice that are as distinct genetically as two human tribes. With multiple tribes on a single farm (or, though one does not like to think it, in a single house), some are bound to display advantageous traits. They may be able to survive catastrophic cold, or elude a better mousetrap, or grow fat and sleek on a new and short-lived food source. Inbreeding thus facilitates rapid evolution. Nest-building behavior, for example, appears to have a genetic basis, and in the relatively short time house mice have lived in this country, genetic variability has enabled them to adapt that behavior to suit different living conditions: when raised in an identical environment, offspring of Maine mice consistently use more cotton in their nests than do the offspring of Floridians. Paul K. Anderson of the University of Calgary has referred to this adaptiveness as "evolutionary serendipity." No matter what the tune, no matter if the orchestra strikes up a waltz or a jig, a minuet or a tango, there is probably a mouse somewhere who can dance to it.

Mice reproduce at blitzkrieg speed. Females normally give birth for the first time at 6 to 8 weeks of age and every four weeks thereafter. According to one researcher's estimate, a pair of mice producing six pups per litter, and with successive generations doing likewise, would yield 2,688 living animals at the end of six months (fortunately, this theoretical figure does not reflect the high mortality rate outside the laboratory). It appears that their fecundity confuses even the mice themselves. Females may nurse the young of other females; even immature animals that have never given birth will sometimes begin nurturing the pups. One can imagine the original couple so overwhelmed with progeny that sooner or later, somebody—everybody—had better move out.

And this is in fact what happens. In a study of feral house mice living on Great Gull Island off the Connecticut coast, Anderson estimated that 75 percent of all offspring become colonizers. Sheer numbers—combined with limited opportunity in the hierarchical social world of their home territory—drive young and subordinate mice out into the world. Because neighboring groups are closed to males, they seek territories of their own—to which genetic variability may leave them uniquely predisposed—and try to establish new communities. And thus do mice make the world their dominion.

A disproportionate number of herpetologists

Blitzkrieg reproduction, while crucial to the ubiquitous success of the house mouse, is also the point on which it ceases to be a cute little critter and slides inexorably into the realm of vermin. Mouse reproduction is a daunting phenomenon even for the members of the American Fancy Rat and Mouse Association. You get a sense of this from the perfunctory names the breeders give their prize specimens: AJA, ASTA, ABBA. The imagination plainly balks at the task of naming even the pick of the litter.

And as for the runts—among the folks at the Orange County Fair who uphold the slogan "What's Nice? Rats and Mice!" there seems to be a disproportionate number of herpetologists. There are even mouse entrepreneurs, who sell what are termed "feeder" mice to zoos. Among the mere amateurs, 16-year-old Molly

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Nicander keeps two snakes, both of which deeply enjoy the company of feeder mice. Even Debbie Prosser, the sympathetic show judge, keeps a king snake and feeds it what she calls "pinkies." If a breeder of champion golden retrievers were to admit hurling live pups over the fence to her pet tiger, she would doubtless be drummed out of the American Kennel Club. For mousers, who have come to accept reproduction-gone-berserk as the rule, a handy snake is simply a way of mimicking the balance of nature.

But for most people who don't fancy mice, snakes are probably not a very good solution to rampant reproduction in the house. Indeed, there doesn't seem to be a really good solution, and this begins to suggest the problem that people have with mice. Partly it is a matter of cultural or psychological trespass: mice infiltrate our homes furtively and without invitation. We come to know them only as phantoms—a pattering of footsteps overhead (wild mice given exercise wheels can achieve 60,000 revolutions in a single night), a scattering of droppings under the kitchen sink (a single mouse voids 50 or more droppings daily and can spread salmonellosis), a blur of movement just off to one side of the hearth (that kinesthetic sense means mice know nooks and crannies of the house that we can hardly imagine). And it's never just one mouse. We begin to get an unsettling sense that mice have made *us* their dominion.

Consider the phenomenon of mouse plagues. For reasons no one understands, mice have at times descended on communities, or welled up from within communities, in truly horrific numbers. Witnesses to a spectacular Australian plague in 1917 reported that 544 *tons* of house mice were caught in just one town. In Kern County, California, in 1926, an estimated four billion mice—literally ankle-deep waves of them—infested an area 18 miles in diameter during a four-month period, far too many mice for even a very playful cat.

But since there seems to be precious little we can do about mice, perhaps we should try to think of them in a more benign context. The truth is that mouse plagues are rare. And considering their ubiquity and the potential for destruction, mice really do relatively little damage. They offend our sensibilities more than our pocketbooks.

If one searches high and low, and in and out of the records, it is even possible to find an instance of mice doing actual good. Each autumn in Eastern Europe, so-called spike, or mound, mice, which are another species of house mice, prepare for winter by constructing mounds of earth in the fields. Each mound has a core of pure grain—up to 15 pounds of corn, millet or barley gleanings left behind by farmers. It has occurred to the farmers that these grain hoards might feed livestock as well as mice, and so in the fall they drive their wagons out into the fields and raid the rodent pantries.

If we can suppress the primordial urge to cry "Eek!" a moment longer, it is even arguable that the house mouse has done good—or, anyway, not much harm—in a larger ecological sense. First, it has conquered the world without causing, so far as we can tell, the extinction of any other species. Unlike the notorious rabbit, for instance, it does not bully its competitors out of their homes or wipe out their food supply with its voracious nibbling. It has merely been adept at filling vacancies—most often vacancies that humans have created. Second, the house mouse has unintentionally provided food not just for Ukrainian livestock but for innumerable other creatures, notably snakes, weasels, stoats, foxes, hawks, barn owls and house cats, all of which doubtless agree that mice are nice.

Let us return, then, to our original question: Do we applaud the house mouse? Taken individually, it is, as the naturalist Count Georges de Buffon wrote, "a beautiful creature; its skin sleek and soft; its eyes bright and lively; all its limbs . . . formed with exquisite delicacy." And it is also, as Burns wrote, our "poor, earth-born companion," its life inextricably tied up with ours, equaling our success as a species, but not our destructiveness. So do we clap?

I say we give the house mouse a standing ovation.

Oh, and one other thing. This is probably the outraged homeowner in me speaking, but since we're all going to be standing anyway, what do you say we get together and stamp out the little beasties underfoot, once and for all?

Exiting stealthily, mouse slips through a hole in
the wall. The scratches may testify to earlier pursuers.

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1933
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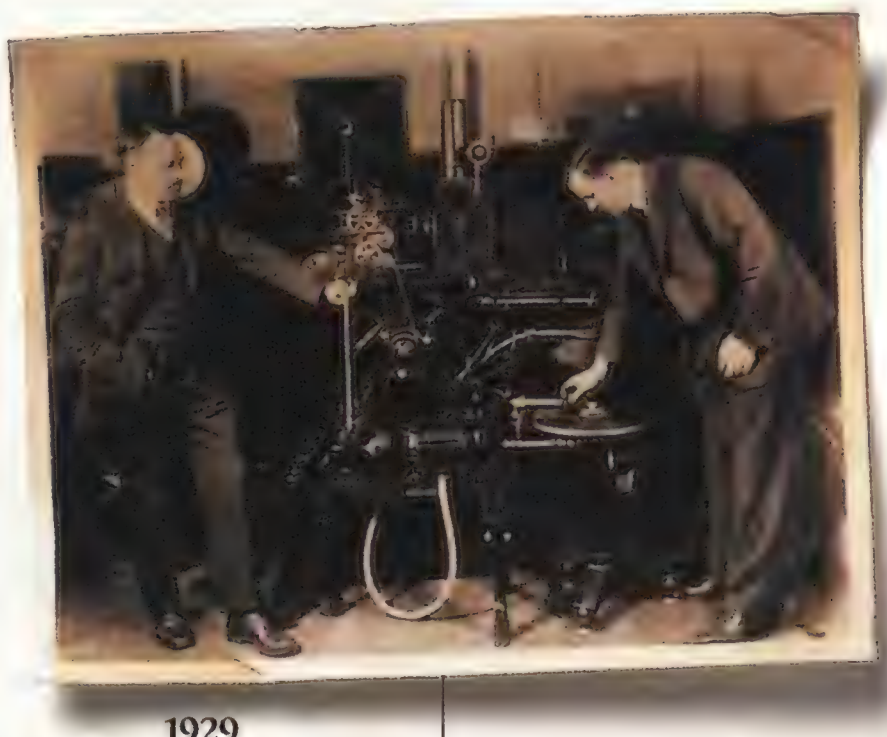

1929
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The right choice.

By Doug Stewart

The quarries hum as architects enter a new stone age

Sliced and carved stone for facades of new buildings is in growing demand again, and quarrying, once a dying art, has revived

Mac McLaughlin is a patient man, which is a good thing. As head gang sawyer for the Bybee Stone Company in Ellettsville, Indiana, he oversees the stone mill's gang saws, giant contraptions that saw through 15-ton blocks of limestone the way a bread slicer cuts a loaf of bread—but stale bread, *very* stale bread.

"If you push it, you could probably get these two blocks done by 2 or 3 o'clock this afternoon," McLaughlin yells over the din of the mill one recent morning. The gang saw chugging away before us, spewing water and ground limestone onto the floor, has already been at it for three hours. Despite the machine's obvious muscle, as evidenced by its constant deafening roar, its 12 diamond-impregnated blades have worked their way down barely two feet into the pair of quarry blocks. Three other gang saws keep pace alongside, and the mill has added a night shift to keep all the stone moving. Builders around the country are impatient to buy stone these days; every piece of stone the Bybee mill cuts is already spoken for, whether destined for a state capitol in the Midwest or for a skyscraper in Manhattan.

Over the roar of the gang saws, McLaughlin, a sturdily built man in dust-covered overalls who's been cutting stone for 38 years, sums up the recent history of

Dust-covered carver at Bybee Stone Company holds a limestone baluster, one part of a stairway railing.

At Victor Oolitic quarry, a 200-ton slice of limestone is toppled by air bags fitted into slots, then inflated.

Photographs by Michael Melford

Bybee carver Ronald Wampler took up his father's trade; his own son is an apprentice carver at the mill.

the Indiana limestone business: "It was good, then it got bad, then it got good again," he shouts. "It goes in cycles, I'd say. But it's good right now. Awful good."

Indiana limestone is not alone in enjoying renewed popularity. Builders in the United States bought 8 times as much finished marble in 1986 as in 1980 and 20 times as much granite. Limestone statistics are hard to collect since producers tend to be small, family-run outfits, but limestone orders, too, have jumped year by year. No longer is stone relegated to banks and courthouses seeking a monumental, trust-inspiring look. In the 1980s, stone means style. Part of the reason is the trendsetting pseudoclassical facades and lobbies of architects like Philip Johnson and Michael Graves. Other factors are the natural insulating properties of stone and the growing demand for renovating historic buildings instead of knocking them down. With orders for stone piling up, quarries and mills from Texas to Vermont are buying new equipment, adding shifts and coaxing retirees back to work.

All this has been good news for Monroe and Lawrence counties in southern Indiana. Extending for some 50 miles just below the surface of this region, sometimes poking up through the meager soil, is a frozen river of solid, top-quality limestone, several miles wide and up to 60 feet deep, known as the Salem Outcrop. Southern Indiana was a shallow, tranquil ocean 300 million to 350 million years ago. Minute sea creatures flourished, died, sank and piled up on the seabed in a thick, even deposit—give or take a few shark's teeth. (Fortunately, all this sedimentation occurred before fish had bones.) The result today is the richest bed of accessible architectural stone in the nation. From this

Blocks of stone enter Bybee mill at rear to be cut with big gang saws. Mill has been operating since 1860.

deposit came the millions of tons of fine-grained stone that encase the Empire State Building, the Pentagon, Rockefeller Center, much of Yale University, 14 state capitols, the Metropolitan Museum of Art and countless government buildings in Washington, D.C.

The homegrown architecture of Indiana's stone country is in sharp contrast to the palatial destinations of so much of the stone it has shipped since the mid-1800s. Here in this region of rolling pastureland and hardscrabble farms, stone is simply a cheap and ubiquitous building material. Everything is stone—not only the office buildings and most of the campus of Indiana University in Bloomington, but also the gun shops, the cocktail lounges, the discount drugstores and some-

Doug Stewart is a regular contributor. His most recent articles were on portraits, in the July issue, and on spy cameras, in the October 1987 issue.

Diamond and circular saws trim pieces at right front; at left, the cutters and carvers use hand tools.

Bybee worker Dick Taylor operates circular saw to rip limestone as water cools blade, keeps down dust.

times the siding on the double-width mobile homes.

In stone country, quarrying and cutting limestone is generally a family affair, with fathers working alongside their sons. (Female stone workers are almost unheard of.) At the Bybee Stone Company, Wilbur Bybee has all four of his sons with him, and many of his older employees have brought in their sons during the recent expansion. To Bybee, the best way to understand stone is to spend your life in it. "My family's been in the stone business forever," he says. "It's all I know."

Bybee is a sleepy-eyed 64-year-old with a down-home drawl and a straightforward marketing pitch. "When you build a building out of Indiana limestone," he says, "you build it, and there it is. It just sits there forever." He allows that concrete may be a bit cheaper, but concrete doesn't age as gracefully as natural Indiana limestone. "With concrete, after 10 or 12 years you don't even want to get close to it," he says. Neither does Bybee think much of sandstone, which, fortunately for the Indiana limestone industry in general, is a major component of the U.S. Capitol. Bybee Stone is one of a number of local mills that have been trucking replacement pieces to Capitol Hill over the past few years. "That stone just wasn't real good to start with," Bybee says. "The Capitol has 38 coats of paint, you know. That's what's holding the damn thing up."

Building stones can be thick or thin and the Bybee mill produces both kinds. The thin pieces are usually featureless rectangles destined to be exterior wall panels. The thick pieces can accommodate what Bybee calls fancy stuff: cornices, dentils, scrollwork and other ornamentation. Close to a third of the mill's volume is restoration work, which helps keep a large contingent of cutters, carvers and planermen busy. Bybee used to make the mistake of hiring self-described sculptors—art majors from Indiana University, mostly—to learn stone carving. "They'll shave off a little here and they'll sand a little there," he says in a sarcastic singsong. "They'll do a day's work in six weeks."

The Bybee mill is certainly no fine-arts studio. The cavernous space is filled with limestone dust, grinding, sawing and hammering noises, and endless stacks of heavy stone slabs. There's not a clean window in the place. At the far end of the room, a vertical-lathe operator is slowly digging a shallow trench in a cylinder six feet in diameter. After 20 of these grooves are scraped out, the piece will end up in a 50-foot fluted column outside a new building in downtown Washington. Nearby stands a finished section; its classical appearance, like some relic in the Roman Forum, seems oddly out of place amid the grimy tumult.

Dusty tools hang at Summit and Evans mill: chain and "dog" for lifting, air hose for drills and saws.

At Bybee, crane lowers block for cutting. Columns at right are destined for new edifice in Washington, D.C.

Past the lathe, the gang saws and the circular diamond saws, a planer is gouging out a pair of small, sharp grooves along two corners of a long bar of stone. Later, a joint saw will slice the bar into sections like a salami, yielding keystones for arches in the capital's Washington Cathedral. As the cutters and sawyers and planermen work, they spit tobacco juice on the uneven dirt floor. Within 15 minutes, I notice, the steady deposition of limestone dust from all the cutting completely obscures the wet splotches. I wonder if the floor of the Bybee mill, like the ground of the Roman Forum, is destined to be buried over time.

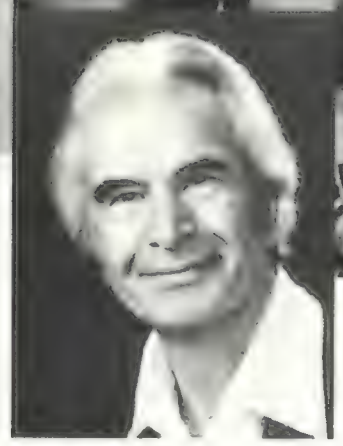
Every few minutes there is a general migration away from the center of the mill as a 15-ton quarry block floats past overhead, hanging from the hooks of a horizontal crane that runs on trolley tracks atop the mill walls. No one bothers to wear hard hats in the mill, but everybody is scrupulous about staying out from under these dangling blocks. As one stone man tells me, "If a block ever fell on you, we'd just carve your name on it and leave it there."

Henry Morris, 59, is the Bybee Stone Company's master carver, a man who may have carved more stone than Michelangelo ever laid eyes on. A carver, unlike a cutter, has no exact pattern to work from. With a hand-held pneumatic chisel, Morris has had to carve exact replicas of statues using a small photograph as a guide. He recently re-created the once-ornate capitals of pilasters on the Iowa State Capitol's facade. "You can see out there what I had to work from," Morris says, spitting tobacco juice and gesturing toward a featureless sandstone capital, four feet wide, sitting in the

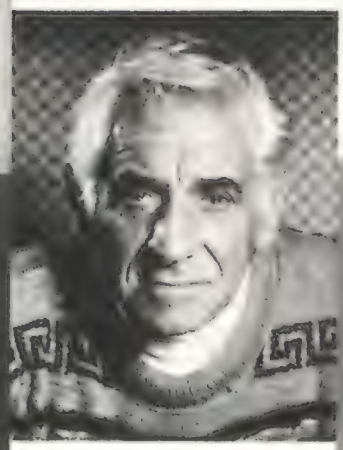
Joe Williams

Liza Minnelli

Glenn Close



Dave Brubeck



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dirt outside. Shipped from Des Moines as a sample, the largely decomposed original appears to have been carved out of dried mud. Morris' version is a burst of swirling, sharply detailed foliage and scrollwork.

Stone carving has been called a dying art, but in the Bybee mill, as elsewhere in Indiana, many of the carvers, and cutters hoping to be carvers, are young men. Jeff Leisz, a crew-cut 26-year-old in bare feet and running shorts, is one of the mill's up-and-coming carvers. Leisz started at the bottom, cutting firewood for the mill's potbellied stoves. He soon switched to cutting stone instead. As I watch, he shaves away little V's of rock from an edge overhanging a partly finished scroll on one side of a four-ton block. The grooves will soon become spaces between leaves on a capital. Leisz wields his chisel-tipped air hammer with the smooth, steady stroke of a barber trimming a customer's neck. During a break, Leisz pulls off his goggles and earplugs and explains how his working style differs from a sculptor's. "Most sculptors that I've seen, they may not have a concrete idea when they start out, so they'll play around with the stone a little bit more," he says. "For me, I know exactly what I want." He points to a nearby stand on which there's a finished version that he's copying. "I just have to go in there and get it."

Indiana stone carvers may be uncomfortable being labeled as sculptors, but the best of them can carve anything they set their minds to, from ornamental birdbaths to cigar-smoking frogs. A common pastime for retired stone carvers is to carve their own tombstones, and cemeteries in Monroe and Lawrence counties are graced with many of the results. But though stone men like to say they work on limestone all their lives and end up buried beneath it, in fact most have the good sense to order granite tombstones instead, for limestone is soft. The surface of a limestone block can be scratched with a pocketknife. After years of weathering, carved limestone, like sandstone, will lose its sharpness.

Still, softness in stone is a relative term. That the quarrymen of the 1800s used sledgehammers, hand drills and two-man crosscut saws to dig massive quarry blocks out of the ground is almost inconceivable. Even today, quarrying limestone is a slow and arduous operation. To see how it's done, I visit the Reed Quarry a few miles down the road from the Bybee stone mill. The larger stone companies both dig and cut stone, but Reed concentrates on the digging.

"In one year, we can quarry a half-acre to full depth," says owner Ted Reed from a gravelly ridge overlooking a pit about 60 feet deep and somewhat larger than a football field. "We've got 90 acres around here, so it would take us 180 years to quarry it all." Reed is a friendly, big-boned man in his 60s with the twangy drawl and weathered good looks of an old-time

Carver Dick Hays, 80, is oldest worker at Bybee mill, and has been honing skills for 60 years. Here he shapes a limestone bracket for the Iowa State Capitol, producing replica to replace old part of the facade.

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Workmen at Reed Quarry begin splitting stone block just cut out of the wall and pulled over by a crane.

movie cowboy. His quarry is surrounded by seven stiff-legged derricks, vertical steel towers pointing skyward with starbursts of thick steel guys fanning out to anchorages on the ground. Cables crisscross the sky. Everywhere are grout piles—mountains of weathered quarry blocks deemed unsalable because of poor color, fractures, mud seams or other flaws. The site has the look of an abandoned circus that's lately been used for bombing practice.

Below us, the quarry workers have cut the exposed limestone floor into rectangles so that it resembles a giant pan of gingerbread. Stone quarrying is nothing like the 1932 film *I Am a Fugitive from a Chain Gang*, with sweat-covered wretches swinging picks and sledges in a crowd. Nor is it like the work done by road-building crews who set off radio-controlled blasts from afar; explosives are apt to cause fractures in limestone. People quarry stone the way you slice a wedding cake: in neat tiers, and carefully.

When I first peer into the quarry, I assume the handful of men down below are on a break. In fact, quietly and almost invisibly, a set of wire saws is hard at work slicing a series of 100-foot cuts in the quarry floor. The saws operate all day with little interference, so the skeleton crew running them is free to toss rocks at cans while listening for signs of trouble.

A wire saw isn't really a saw at all but a long loop of thin steel cable that runs over and around a sequence of clattering wheels, or sheaves. The latter are stuck on posts around the quarry and throughout the terrain above it, forming a dozen-odd corners along a 2,000-foot circuit. "We run it all over the countryside," Reed explains, "so the wire will be long enough not to wear out before we get to the bottom of the cut." The part doing the cutting is whichever section of the wire is currently forced into a cut by the sheaves spinning on either side. As the cut deepens, a quarryman lowers the two closest sheaves farther into precut holes to keep the wire bearing down. A mixture of white sand and water sloshes into the cut to give the wire its bite. From above, the loudest sound is the quiet rattling of the sheaves.

In the old days, quarry work was a higher-decibel job. In the weeds above the Reed Quarry is a rusted-out channeling machine, the wire saw's unloved predecessor. Small armies of these two-man electric and steam-driven monsters used to inch along temporary railroad tracks laid on quarry floors, ceaselessly pounding chisel-ended bars into the stone like so many pile drivers. "We would need 24 men and 12 machines to make a double cut," Reed says. "With the wire saws, two men do the same job in half the time." He expects his wire saws, in turn, to be outmoded by the latest

At Victor Oolitic mill in Indiana, limestone blocks weighing 8 to 20 tons are stacked in monumental walls.

quarry innovation: speedy, diamond-edged chain saws that can quickly slice ten or more feet into the rock underneath.

Down below, a wire saw has finished making a vertical cut. A crew of workers with pneumatic drills starts cracking the bottom of the freight-car-size block along its grain. The block still isn't free, so a man with a sledgehammer steps in to finish the job. I ask Reed if there isn't a better way to do this than with a sledgehammer. "There is, but we haven't found it," he says. Finally, everyone steps aside as a crane operator "turns the cut," pulling on a cable hooked to the block until it topples onto its side in an explosion of dust. The men clamber up onto the monolith and set to work splitting it into eight-foot quarry blocks with drills and wedges (opposite).

The Salem Outcrop is pitted with hundreds if not thousands of similar quarries, most of them abandoned long ago. Peer through the stands of sycamores and silver poplars in the hills outside Bedford and Bloomington and you're apt to see rusting railroad tracks leading nowhere, moss-covered grout piles, forests of old derricks with cables still attached, and quarry after quarry filled with green water, cascades of debris and the odd refrigerator. The most majestic of all of these lies in the woods just outside Needmore, just past the Gulletts Creek Baptist Church and down the road from the little white house with the stone pyramid squatting on the front lawn. This quarry, the Empire Hole, was opened in the late 1920s to provide limestone for the Empire State Building. It closed when the building was finished. With its towering walls and its massive stone derrick stools rising like ziggurats from the edge of the water, the quarry has the same grandeur as its beneficiary on Manhattan's 34th Street.

Today, many of the architects who have begun ordering stone, whether limestone, granite or marble, are hoping to endow their buildings with the same aura of stately timelessness that the Empire State exudes. If any one building kicked off this revival, it was the AT&T Building in Manhattan, designed by Philip Johnson and John Burgee ten years ago. "Everything was becoming so much the same," Burgee says today. "There was one glass box after another." Johnson and Burgee went with a controversial broken-pediment top, and for the facade they chose granite. Not just any granite, but Stony Creek pink, from a quarry in Connecticut. "It has a character," says Burgee, who with Johnson has since specified the same stone for building after building. "It's called pink, but what color is it

Empire Hole in Indiana is the now-abandoned quarry out of which came all the limestone for the Empire State Building.

Indiana tombstone of carver who died in mill was modeled on his workbench, tools, made by co-workers.

really? It's gray and pink and red and crystal and white. It has a depth and a richness and a natural variation that makes it beautiful, not like some flat, painted surface." At first, many observers failed to share his enthusiasm. One critic called the AT&T Building a "tarted-up painted lady," Burgee recalls.

When the order came in for 170,000 cubic feet of pink granite for the AT&T job, the Stony Creek Granite Quarry was in the depths of a slump. The quarry had once shipped stone for the base of the Statue of Liberty and for the building of Grand Central Station. Now it was cutting paving stones and church steps, and not too many of those. At $8 million, the total AT&T order was 16 times what the quarry had grossed the year before.

Compared with other stones, in recent years granite has often been the choice not only for tombstones but for exterior building stone. Nationwide, it outsells limestone by better than two to one. Granite's selling points are its hardness and weather-resistant polished finish. But hardness is also what makes granite cutting synonymous with hard labor. At Stony Creek, general manager Steven Castellucci, a fifth-generation stone man whose family bought the quarry in 1956, gives me an idea of what's involved.

"It's an honest day's pay, believe me," he says as we tramp through one of several quarry locations dug into a hill overlooking Long Island Sound. Examining a deep cut the workers have just made in the rock floor, I'm surprised to see how crooked it is, as though it had been chopped with an ax rather than sliced with a wire saw. "You'd better not let the gentleman who cut that hear you," Castellucci says (he calls all his quarrymen gentlemen), pointing toward Fred Fassett, his 320-pound ledge boss at work in the distance. For the record, Fassett's cut was admirably done. The reason it might appear crooked is that he created it with a long, hand-held pipe called a quarry torch that spews blue flame; a wire saw would take forever in a granite quarry. Another torch worker nearby, his ears well plugged, begins assaulting a stretch of smooth rock. The noise the torch makes as it slowly disintegrates the line of granite in its path suggests a Saturn V rocket that has just lifted off and is now hovering ten feet overhead. In the center of the quarry, a man in a hard hat signals with his hand and Castellucci pulls me up to higher ground. "They're toenailing that block," he explains. There's a sharp blast and a small mushroom cloud poofs into the air. Rather than subject the irregular and unusable end of the block to sawing at the granite mill, the quarrymen have sliced it off in situ with black powder. Carpentry this isn't.

Stony Creek granite has a fiery past, appropriately enough. It was formed when a pool of molten rock forced its way up through the continental crust, cooled and hardened while still underground, then was exposed by erosion. The deposit of pink-beige granite streaked with black extends several miles south into Long Island Sound, where it appears as a series of rounded stone outcroppings called the Thimble Islands. "That's Stony Creek coming up out of the water," says Castellucci from the shore, with a proprietary sweep of his hand.

Hand drilling is now computerized

John Barnes, the semiretired quarry boss, recalls a time when hundreds of people worked in the local mills, or stone sheds, where granite was slabbed and cut. "If it wasn't for the quarry, there wouldn't be any Stony Creek," he says. Barnes' father and both grandfathers were granite workers here. "In the old days everything was done by hand," he says. "They even drilled by hand." A man would hold a drill in one hand and bang the end of it with a small sledgehammer. Then he'd give the drill a quarter-turn with his wrist and bang it again. At intervals, he'd remove the pulverized granite with a spoon. Today, at a brand-new stone shed across the line in Rhode Island, a venture the Castelluccis run jointly with a large Italian firm, computer-controlled drills, saws and other machinery turn out finished pieces of Stony Creek pink with a minimum of human interference.

Lately, thousands of these pieces have been trucked to Boston, where they are being affixed to Philip Johnson and John Burgee's latest architectural extravaganza, a new structure for The New England insurance company (formerly New England Life). The building

looms high above the brownstones of Back Bay, clad in pink from sidewalk to roof and topped with a copper-sheathed barrel vault. On the rooftop one recent morning, I watch a stone setter in a Notre Dame T-shirt complete the journey of a granite fascia, or facing piece, from its origins underground to its destination at the top of the office building's high arch. As it's hoisted into position on a winch chain, the fascia appears dangerously flimsy—it's the size of a desktop but barely more than an inch thick, after all. With granite, however, appearances are deceiving. The slab weighs close to 300 pounds and it's rugged enough to withstand a hearty kick from the stone setter's steel-toed boot as he wrestles it into position from his scaffold.

I make the mistake of asking Bill Weis, who is supervising the stone setters, precisely how the fascia is attached to the building's steel frame. "Here, let me show you," he says, and climbs up the rigging that covers the side of the arch and steps out onto the slanting boards that cover the top of the vault. I follow him up and peer over the top of the arch, trying not to notice the courtyard 350 feet straight down. Weis points out the stainless-steel pins and lips that clasp the granite edges snugly in place. The fascia, in fact, is a trick. Behind it is mostly air. Arches in ancient Rome were built honestly, of stone stacked on stone. So were the pyramids and so was the Washington Monument. Architects create the optical illusion that this is how modern stone buildings stand up, but for the past century building stone has really been a veneer hung on steel frames. No one can afford pyramids anymore (nor would they want windows like tunnels).

Still, though the structure of the modern stone building is illusory, its surface has a naturalness—an earthiness, quite literally—that's undeniably appealing. When the AT&T Building was under construction, John Burgee recalls, friends told him they would cross Madison Avenue to touch the stone facade. "They couldn't resist it," he says. "Whoever heard of a person crossing a street to touch aluminum or glass?"

Arch "keystone" atop The New England insurance building in Boston is really a thin slice of stone, being hung on tower's steel frame by Anthony Cammarata. Pink granite is from Stony Creek Quarry, Connecticut.

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Opposite: Seen from inside, balloon *Future World* is fired up for flight. Meanwhile, crowds (above) cluster around as other hot-air balloons slowly mushroom up to size before being loosed into the Albuquerque sky.

Photographs by Douglas Faulkner

Full of hot air, and fancier free than ever

More and more people are being borne aloft by bright-hued bubbles of cloth in a sport both beautiful to see and uplifting to the spirit

It is an age-old childhood pastime: blowing iridescent soap bubbles, watching them float away and maybe wishing you could float away with one. Ballooning may not exactly fulfill that wish, but today, as thousands of people every year are learning, it comes about as close as grown-ups can hope for.

It was not always so. Back in 1783 when the Montgolfier brothers first demonstrated that a lightweight bag filled with hot air would rise, the sport didn't catch on, perhaps because the air was heated by burning a noxious mixture of wool and straw, perhaps because when the weird monster from the sky landed it was set upon by French peasants with pitchforks. Later that year a flight was made using lighter-than-air hydrogen gas. For the next 180 years, expensive (and sometimes dangerous) gas was the medium of choice for balloon lift-off, and ballooning remained a sport of the adventurous rich. It wasn't until the 1960s with the advent of better fabrics and the system of burning propane to get aloft—and to regulate the temperature thereafter—that hot-air ballooning really came into its own.

Unlike gas, the use of hot air is sporadically noisy,

since the air must be frequently reheated and the burning propane makes a roaring sound. Upward movement is controlled by increasing the temperature of the air; as the air cools, gravity takes care of coming down. The whim of the breezes controls most other movement. Balloonists are so at one with the wind, in fact, that they feel no wind at all; once aloft they can spread out a map and it won't blow away.

Balloon bags today are sewn from a flame-retardant, ripstop fabric like that used for parachutes, and baskets are usually made of light wicker. The average balloon is about 55 feet around and 70 feet high. Complete with basket, lines and propane-burning device, it costs about $15,000. Stock patterns in brilliant hues are now available, but many balloonists dream up their own, registering them to be sure their creation stays unique. Dramatic changes have taken place in the design of bizarre, new shapes (pp. 106-07). To celebrate the bicentennial of the Constitution last year, an inflated Liberty Bell flew over Philadelphia. Many companies send up balloons made to represent products or mascots. Publisher Malcolm Forbes began his collection of nine oddly shaped balloons with a lighter-than-air version of a chateau he owns in France. He has since added a Harley-Davidson motorcycle 200 feet long and a bust of Beethoven bigger than any face on Mount Rushmore.

The largest annual gathering of balloonists, where the photographs on these pages were taken, is the Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta each October, which draws 500 balloonists and upwards of 800,000 spectators. Balloonists compete in events that measure flying accuracy. In one, they drop markers at a target. (The Albuquerque markers are packets of wildflower seeds, so if they miss, so much the better.) In the "key grab," car keys are attached to a pole and contestants try to grab them as their balloon floats by, thus winning the car that goes with the keys.

Sometimes with hors d'oeuvres and wine

"There's a saying in ballooning that the first ride is free," says Mary Woodhouse, editor of *Ballooning*, journal of the Balloon Federation of America. "The second will cost you $15,000. After the first, you're just going to have to own a balloon." The Federal Aviation Administration certifies pilots in skills that take about 15 hours to acquire. Experienced pilots dispense helpful tips on maneuvering—and how to talk to a farmer whose alfalfa you've just landed in. Happily, farmers aren't usually waiting with pitchforks anymore. In fact, says Carl Gage, a California flight instructor, "people are wonderful when you arrive by balloon. Every mother, father, child and dog comes out to greet you—sometimes with hors d' oeuvres and wine."
Sally Scott Maran

Euphoria induced by an imminent lift-off shows in the face of a passenger as pilot adjusts propane flame.

In a crowd-pleasing event known as a "balloon glow," tethered balloons are fired up, lighting the night sky.

Individual balloon designs such as that of *Laura's Diamond*, which is owned by Roland Cleveland, from Arizona, are often registered with the manufacturer so that no one can copy them.

Effortlessly floating skyward over the desert launching field, balloons drift like dandelion seeds on the wind during an early-morning mass ascension as uniformed launch directors look on.

Paired in close flight as well as in their colorful stripes, the two balloons at left show opening into which heated air that inflates them rises from propane burner. When suspended en masse, at right, soaring balloons resemble so many tops—or a bright galaxy of Christmas tree ornaments.

Owner and friends (below) inspect a balloon during early stages of its inflation. To avoid damaging fabric they stand in vent opening close to the top of the bag. "Tony the Tiger" (opposite), as seen here upside down, has eyebrows that look much like a mustache gone awry.

Floating sculptures, abstract balloons from Vienna, hang as futuristic silhouettes in the evening sky. Designed by Austrian artist André Heller, they are among the most innovative creations aloft today.

We almost lost it in 1906.

San Francisco. One of the world's golden cities. But for two days in April 1906, San Francisco seemed lost. First a series of tremors leveled nearly 500 square blocks. Then fires swept through the rubble, reducing it to ash.

The story of the San Francisco earthquake and fire, and the city's eventual recovery, is told — at times by surviving eyewitnesses — in the premiere broadcast of a new public television series, *The American Experience*, which begins Tuesday, October 4 in most cities and continues for 16 weeks.

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By Donald Dale Jackson

Henry Mercer makes more sense as time goes on

Bucks County's ingenious student of Man and crafter of tiles helped define Americans' shared past by collecting preindustrial tools

Mercer, who never married, doted on Sailor and other retrievers he owned throughout his lifetime.

Henry Chapman Mercer was 56 when he stood in front of a roomful of restless schoolchildren in his hometown of Doylestown, Pennsylvania, one day in the autumn of 1912—a tall, spare man with a thick drooping mustache, sad faraway eyes and a dignified professorial manner. His lecture topic was "The Prehistoric Forest of North America," which, he told the class, once covered all of Pennsylvania. But he was soon launched on an exuberant digression about how William Penn's heirs bilked the Delaware Indians.

He moved on to his own adventures as an archaeologist digging for bones and artifacts in American caves, and his discovery of a mammoth's tooth "soft as an overripe apple" in Texas. He explained fossils, discoursed on the history of tobacco smoking and somehow arrived at the question of whether Norse explorers fetched up in the New World before Columbus.

Mercer lost his natural reserve as he regaled the youngsters with a range of knowledge that appeared limitless, and his gray eyes glowed as he reached the central message: "Research, discovery, investigation, the longing to open a new door and to find out something never known before, what a burning fire it is and how it seizes upon us!" he declared passionately. "Barbarism and darkness must be dispelled by the splendid torch of knowledge. I hope all of you will get hold of this torch and wave it about."

Curator Sheila Garred tells schoolchildren about objects in Mercer Museum's towering central court.

Mercer, who died in 1930, spent much of his life waving the torch, hoping to fire others with his zeal. He was an extraordinary American original, a man whose many facets make him impossible to categorize. He was successively (and sometimes simultaneously) a pioneering archaeologist-anthropologist, a trailblazing museum founder, a peerless potter and tile maker, and an innovative architect. But although he left behind a formidable legacy, fame eluded him—the price of versatility, perhaps, or of a low-profile small-town career.

Only a few Americans have ever heard of him, and they are mostly residents of Bucks County, Pennsylvania, where two castles-in-concrete he built have become National Historic Landmarks. One was his home; the other is a museum bearing his name that contains one of the first and finest collections of the tools and utensils used by ordinary Americans in the years preceding the Machine Age.

Mercer is periodically "rediscovered" like some misplaced artifact, most recently last year in a book by ceramics historian Cleota Reed entitled *Henry Chapman Mercer and the Moravian Pottery and Tile Works.* His name might be writ larger in history if he had pro-

Photographs by Robert and Susan Noonan

Kiln chimneys punctuate the roof of the Moravian Pottery and Tile Works, which Mercer loosely styled after California mission architecture. He chose poured-in-place reinforced concrete for his buildings.

duced a major book. But Mercer didn't really care about explaining himself; his love was material substances, especially tile and concrete. "Harry Mercer is the only man in America," a friend wrote in 1914, "who has made every abstract idea he ever had, *concrete*."

Apart from his historical import, Mercer was an enchanting, one-of-a-kind character. In Doylestown, a tidily well-preserved town 30 miles north of Philadelphia with a population that never exceeded 5,000 during his lifetime, Mercer was both the most baronial personage in town and the village eccentric, a patrician who rode in the back of an open car in all weather, wearing a cap tied under his chin with a ribbon as he ventured forth on tool-collecting safaris. His fellow townsman James Michener has boyhood memories of watching Mercer, in his 60s, pedal his bicycle daily from his castle home to his one-mile-distant castle museum, escorted by a pair of devoted hounds.

He could exhort the Doylestown schoolchildren to shun moneygrubbing because he was an aristocrat, supported into his 50s by a generous aunt (and later largely by what she left him), but he haggled over nickels when buying apple peelers or fruit jars for his museum. As an old man he rarely left Doylestown and the 42-room fantasy-in-concrete he called Fonthill, which he shared with his dogs and servants but no family. He was very generous to the couple who managed his household and business affairs, providing for them in his will. When they were married, he sent them on a six-month honeymoon to Europe.

But mostly he was cantankerous, condemning almost everything that had cruelly overtaken him during the 1920s—unions, Socialism, women in pants and bobbed hair, and especially daylight savings time, which he flatly refused to accept. Harry Mercer also lived with a sad secret that shadowed his privileged and productive life, a secret that wasn't discovered until long after his death.

The author, who contributes regularly to these pages, has recently written on Crime Dog McGruff.

One of many picture-book fireplaces in Fonthill, his home, illustrates scenes from Dickens' *Pickwick Papers.*

This allowed maximum freedom to borrow from architectural traditions and to showcase his tiles.

Doylestown was a quiet country village when Mercer was born there in 1856, a town where boys made swimming holes by building makeshift dams and traded secrets in hideaways they called pirates' dens. He grew up on a farm owned by his maternal grandfather, a prominent judge and ex-congressman, and managed by his father, who resigned his naval commission before Harry was 3. His family was gentry on both sides; generations of Mercers had been planters in Virginia and Maryland.

The Mercers' lifestyle shifted from comfortable to something approaching regal when Harry's Aunt Elizabeth, known as Lela, inherited a fortune on the death of her husband, Timothy Bigelow Lawrence. Aunt Lela, sister of Mercer's mother, showered gifts on Harry and his parents, beginning with a six-month tour of Europe when he was 14. In letters home young Harry displayed an appreciation of the romance and beauty of the Old World—he was especially fond of castles—and a precocious knack for detailed description.

Lela's wealth also enabled the Mercers to send Harry to Harvard, where he joined the right clubs and opted for courses in the humanities rather than science and mathematics. At Harvard he came under the influence of Charles Eliot Norton, who taught the university's first art history course. Criticizing the runaway materialism of American society, Norton idealized the preindustrial culture of handmade crafts and goods, and argued that the way to understand people of an earlier era was through their arts and artifacts.

At 23, Mercer had a Harvard degree and a liberal education but no clear goal. Like many young men he took himself rather seriously, but he had a sly sense of humor along with charm and refinement. He was bashful and somewhat aloof, temperamental and intellectually arrogant, but also generous, thoughtful and open to novel ideas.

In the absence of any firm career objective he attended the University of Pennsylvania law school for a year and was admitted to the bar in 1881. But Mercer was no lawyer and he knew it; there is no record that he ever practiced. Instead he embarked on another extended jaunt to Europe. He crossed the Atlantic repeatedly during the ensuing half-dozen years, traveling throughout the Continent and North Africa on Aunt Lela's largesse, and filling journals with his copious observations on customs, buildings, art and whatever else caught his fancy.

It was in Vienna, in early 1882, that Mercer learned of the secret that would affect the rest of his life. A Viennese doctor diagnosed a recurrence of gonorrhea,

Fonthill, late-Romantic in style, derives from Mercer's European journeys.

Tiles in the vaulted ceiling of Fonthill's Bow Room are based on an ancient map of the Aztec capital, now the site of Mexico City.

which he had first contracted three years earlier, apparently as a Harvard senior. The eight-page diagnosis was unknown until it was found several years ago by Linda Dyke, the assistant curator at the Fonthill Museum, who has researched Mercer's life extensively. Written on the opening page in Mercer's hand are these pathetic words: "Gonorrhea—very dangerous—no affections of the heart." No love, this must have meant, no marriage, no children—probably no sex, period.

Mercer showed the first signs of settling into a career soon afterward when he decided to study and report on an intriguing stone, called the Lenape stone, found in Bucks County. It depicted three Indians fighting an animal that is unmistakably a woolly mammoth, extinct since the Ice Age. If authentic, the stone could have shored up arguments that ancient man reached North America as far back as the Pleistocene era. Mercer examined the artifact and in 1885 published a tightly reasoned little book that argued for its authenticity, while offering a considered account of the conflicting evidence. Although the stone is now recognized as a fraud, Mercer's publication remains a prototype for the presentation of archaeological debate.

Unfortunately, his association with the Lenape stone has obscured his substantial and largely unacknowledged contributions to the field. He was a painstaking excavator, among the first to understand the importance of investigating stratified areas at dig sites.

Mercer, at 34, finally committed himself to a steady job—albeit without pay—at the University of Pennsylvania. Eager to explore the question of whether primitive peoples had lived in North America during the Ice Age, he became a field archaeologist at the university's Museum of Science and Art.

Searching for human and animal remains, Mercer explored dozens of caves in Pennsylvania, Virginia and Tennessee, and along rivers that prehistoric peoples had traveled in Ohio and Indiana. He uncovered the bones of several beasts, including prehistoric tapirs, peccaries and sloths. In a fast-paced 1895 expedition to the Yucatán peninsula he and his colleagues explored 29 caves in 60 days—but did not uncover evidence of human occupation dating to the Ice Age.

He broke with the university in 1897 in a tiff over control and jurisdiction—he was never a happy subordinate—and took his specimens home. He had already dreamed up a couple of interesting notions about what to do next. One was tile making. Another was starting the systematic collection of American preindustrial tools and utensils—call it American "stuff"—that would become his greatest legacy.

He would later tell, over and over, the story of how the idea for the collection came to him—the Eureka moment—improving it with each rendition. He was picking through a pile of discarded junk at a Doylestown country auction in 1897, the story went, searching for a pair of fireplace tongs. As he rummaged through a "disordered pile of old wagons, gum-tree salt-boxes, flax-brakes, straw beehives, tin dinner-horns, rope-machines and spinning-wheels, things that I had heard of but never collectively saw before, the idea occurred to me that the history of Pennsylvania was here profusely illustrated and from a new point of view."

The new viewpoint was historical archaeology, an

Columbus Room, like the Bow Room, was inspired by tales of New World discovery Mercer heard as boy. He dedicated stairs in this room to his retriever Rollo, after the dog left paw prints in fresh concrete.

In mid-1890s, Henry Mercer studies archaeological artifacts collected during excavation of an Indian village site on the Delaware River. He was a painstaking excavator, shown here cataloguing finds outside of Indian House, the studio that he designed himself.

attempt to understand the recent past the way archaeologists approached the distant past, through everyday objects. Mercer called it "archaeology turned upside down," working backward from artifacts of the near past rather than forward from the ancient past as conventional archaeology did.

"It all came together for him right then," says James Blackaby, curator of the Mercer and Fonthill museums. "His interests in history and archaeology, his overall knowledge and travel background, his ability to make a scholarly case—everything clicked in, he had the perfect combination. And no one had thought of these things that way before."

Mercer began poking into Bucks County attics and haylofts and wagon houses in quest of every discarded tool or utensil. He collected 323 objects in the first three weeks. Explaining what he was up to with this collection was never easy for him. Most of his Doylestown neighbors thought junk was junk. To get past this barrier he spelled out what he had in mind repeatedly, most successfully in the catalog he wrote in 1897 for the first exhibit of the things he called "The Tools of the Nation Maker": "These castaways," he wrote, offered "manifold elucidations of nationality.... They give us a fresh grasp upon the vitality of the American beginning. At first illustrating an humble story, they unfold by degrees a wider meaning, until at last the heart is touched."

By October of that watershed year in his life, Mercer was exhibiting a collection of 761 objects under the auspices of the Bucks County Historical Society, which he had helped found in 1880. He viewed the collection as a resource for historians and researched each item, pioneering oral history techniques in gathering information about how tools were made and used. He was at pains to point out that his collection was "ahead of everybody. We are original, alone, unique."

Mercer had to invent exhibition categories. He ultimately came up with a scheme that shoehorned everything into 12 compartments while broadening the definition of "tools" beyond recognition: tools to make tools; tools for food, shelter, clothing and transport; tools to help language (from "bells" to "books"); tools used in religion, commerce, government, art, science and amusement. First housed at the county courthouse, the collection was moved to Mercer's studio after he had a falling-out with the historical society's leaders, in 1898, over the familiar issue of who was in charge.

It was one of Mercer's early tool-gathering forays that led directly to his infatuation with tile. Visiting the remains of a defunct pottery with his young assistant, Frank Swain, Mercer became intrigued by the vanished art of Pennsylvania-German redware potters. Their individually crafted pieces appealed to him in somewhat the same way preindustrial tools did—they were personal and distinctive. In keeping with the precepts of his college mentor, Norton, and the blossoming Arts and Crafts movement, Mercer believed that "art needs the touch of a human hand." He decided to found a pottery specializing in ornamental tile.

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Lively Aunt Lela, who had lived in Florence, gave Mercer the inspiration to travel and bankrolled him.

As he did with all his enthusiasms, Mercer made an exhaustive study of the tile-making art, consulting European experts to learn techniques of kiln construction, glazing and firing, before setting up his own pottery at home in 1898. He discovered that local clay was ideal for the tiles he produced in a dazzling variety of sizes and forms. He did the original designs on paper, taking his ideas from history, literature and a range of graphic sources, including traditional tile motifs. The designs were then traced on moist clay, from which a mold could be made. The tiles were pressed with that mold, then glazed and baked.

Mercer's tiles were both an artistic and a commercial success almost immediately. In the next six years he patented several tile-making processes and won a grand prize at the World's Fair in St. Louis. Superbly crafted Mercer tiles became status symbols at the best addresses: the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, Grauman's Million Dollar Theater in Los Angeles, the Rockefeller estate in Pocantico Hills, New York, and the chapel at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point.

His approach to tile making was of course idiosyncratic in the Mercer manner: it combined artistry, individuality and education disguised as graphic storytelling. "If tiles could tell no story, inspire or teach nobody, I would have stopped making them long ago," he wrote late in his life. Plain tiles didn't interest him (though they provided most of his sales); his specialty was intricate, stained-glass-like mosaics with narrative motifs. The floor he designed for the Pennsylvania State Capitol at Harrisburg is a masterful evocation of the state's history and natural environment. The tile works was Harry's first profit-making enterprise (and his third building to be designated a National Historic Landmark; it operates today as a museum).

Ending a long-standing feud

Mercer's feud with the historical society ended in 1905 on his terms, which meant that he was in command and his collection would thus be treated with the proper respect. It was moved to the society's first permanent building in 1907. Mercer continued his collecting, a familiar figure as he toured about in his gray cape.

He liked engravings, books with indexes, folk art and tales, Chesapeake Bay retrievers, ghosts, cigars, fiddle music and birds. He fiddled a bit himself, mastering such ditties as "Katy's Ramble" and "Charley the Prayermaster" according to his meticulous list of "jigs learned." He showed his feeling for birds in articles attacking the use of egret feathers for women's hats ("Fashion's Holocaust") and condemning cages ("more tragic and cruel than a human jail").

In 1908 Mercer began building the fantastic mansion that would become, in effect, his autobiography in concrete and tile. His vision of the castle he erected on East Court Street was "an interweaving of my own fancies blending with memories of my travels and suggestions from engravings." Often ignoring the blueprints, Mercer and a small crew worked from sketches and clay models. Improvising details as the house rose, they added tile-ceilinged rooms, stairways and towers, dead-end passageways and quirky alcoves as imagination beckoned. He favored concrete because it was fireproof and easy to shape into varied contours. Envisioning the house as a showcase for his tiles, he designed stunning and intricate mosaics to decorate interior walls and ceilings.

The house evoked the past, resembling a medieval manor, but it also had modern conveniences—electricity, central heating, even an elevator. When it was completed in 1912, Fonthill was Mercer in every room: shadowy passageways recalled his years as a cave explorer; the woodwork was often salvaged from old

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houses he admired; exotica collected in his travels perched on shelves. One panel of tiles congratulated the workmen who labored four years on the house (at $1.75 a day) along with a lone horse, named Lucy, who took care of the heavy lifting (at $1.50 a day and all the hay she could eat).

With the crew now accustomed to the whims of their hands-on boss, Mercer shifted to a plot next to the house and began building a tile factory in 1911, finishing it the next year. The tile works is in a U-shape around a courtyard, in the style of a Spanish colonial mission. Now there was only one more concrete world to conquer, a museum to house the tools—Mercer had accumulated some 15,000 artifacts.

The museum went up between 1913 and 1916 next to the historical society's headquarters. Like the house, it was focused inward, with the emphasis on displaying the collection rather than on outward looks. Mercer gave it plenty of big windows for light and a central atrium for larger items—a whaleboat, fire engine, gristmill and the like. He varied the ceiling levels of the building's four galleries to accommodate particular pieces, and scrambled stairway locations so visitors would have to pass more exhibits.

The forgotten tools of American artisans were displayed behind glass, with minimal explanation, in dozens of cluttered little rooms. Like Fonthill, the museum emanates one man's obsessions. "The building is a clear statement of the past," curator Blackaby says. "It's a time capsule that will keep saying what he wanted it to say." Mercer formally presented the building and his collection to the historical society. House and museum combined cost him about $70,000—it was a simpler time.

Mercer became steadily more disgruntled and reclusive during the years between the end of his one-man building boom in 1916 and his death in 1930. He kept up a heavy correspondence but rarely left town. He composed well-researched historical papers and made a few tentative forays into fiction writing, including a book of ghost tales, without much success. He took two naps daily, ate supper late in his bedroom and often worked until after midnight, rising by 7. His most ambitious project in the later years was an expedition he underwrote to make a photographic record of contemporary Chinese technology.

Mercer never stopped railing about mindless and dispiriting change, neglect of the past, an economy built on waste. He harrumphed about hot dogs, cocktails, women's clothes. He disliked having his picture taken. He kept his house and the pottery on standard time; if he was late, he was late. James Michener, who grew up across the street from Fonthill, but never exchanged a word with its lord, recalls a splendid bonfire Mercer ignited on the topmost parapet of his castle. "I came to think of him as a Germanic knight," Michener wrote, "powerful and aloof, who ventured out now and then to inspect the cottages of his peasants."

Mercer died March 9, 1930, angry and disillusioned as romantics so often are at the end. There were only a few obituaries. A poetic tribute by one Doylestown friend came close to capturing him in a line—"He had the hermit heart which delves apart." His single, lifelong goal, another friend said, was "the acquisition and dissemination of knowledge." It always came back to that, to the wonderful torch of knowledge that proud and lonely Harry Mercer believed in waving about.

Mercer's humor comes through in Family Quarrel tile, with a couple goaded by bellows-blowing demon.

Brought together, coopering tools help remind us how we used to move goods around. Remember barrels?

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CRACKBEAK

Fortirostrum fructiphagum

Perhaps the sexiest of the dinosaur kingdom, crackbeak attracts mates with its colorful beak and head crest. The tree-living reptile's stiff balancing tail makes for a firm anchor while feeding; the grasping hands, like those of its ancestors, the hypsilophodonts, have five fingers, but crackbeak has opposable thumbs.

Don't look now, but the dinosaurs are back—and thriving

In a new book, science writer Dougal Dixon invents a world where reptiles kept evolving and the mammals were kept in their place

WANDLE
Pervagarus altus
Isolated from any predators, these descendants of the pterosaurs are slow-moving, and not very intelligent.

KLOON
Perdalus rufus
Like its cousin the wandle, kloon has very few predators. Though it has no arms, its feet are quite dexterous.

Consider for a moment that the dinosaurs and pterosaurs somehow escaped their fate: neither comets, asteroids, nor any other forces wiped them out, and they are here today, crawling over deserts, cackling from tree branches in tropical forests and wallowing in Florida marshes. The idea isn't new. Science fiction writers have long capitalized on it, ever since Jules Verne's *Journey to the Center of the Earth.* And cartoonists like Gary Larson delight in juxtaposing modern life with highly evolved reptiles. The prospect fascinates school-age children, who love the oversize beasts and can twist their tongues around the multisyllabic names as assiduously as the paleontologists who named them.

Dougal Dixon, author of *The New Dinosaurs,* has toyed with this fantasy since his childhood moviegoing days. The dinosaurs who showed up in contemporary film settings, he noticed, were creatures untouched by the principles of evolution. "Dinosaurs appeared as they appeared in the fossil record," he says. It is an oversight that he has now remedied—Dixon's version of the 20th-century dinosaur is based on the real-life principles of Darwinian evolution. Much like his earlier book *After Man,* an imaginative look at mammalian evolution 50 million years into the future (SMITHSONIAN, October 1981), his latest offering, published this month by Salem House, is a collection of convincing illustrations and biologically believable text.

Gary Larson fans might assume the modern dinosaur to be a smart, talking biped dressed in a business suit and sharing a city subway with similarly clothed humans. Not so, says Dixon. The fact is that we humans would not be here to coexist with our reptile brothers, peaceful or otherwise, because our mammalian ancestors would have remained what they were 65 million years ago: small, mouselike animals. They would not have had the evolutionary opportunity to grow strong and diverse, and to inhabit the planet. As for smart dinosaurs, a humanlike intelligence is unlikely, Dixon explains, since such intelligence requires a sophisticated, warm-blooded physiology to develop. Besides, he points out, intelligence may not be an inevitable result of evolution and may not have any evolutionary advantage at all. "If a group of animals survives and evolves for long enough, can we assume that it will develop into a reasoning, tool-making, war-mongering and art-appreciating civilization?" More likely, he writes, dinosaur intelligence "would be more of an animal cunning, with increasingly more sophisticated hunting techniques and cooperative abilities."

So for the next few pages, join Dixon in imagining an alternative history of the world, one in which the asteroid missed its target, and the dinosaurs are still here on Earth, waiting to greet the 21st century.

Beth Py-Lieberman

SANDLE

Fususaurus foderus

Using its strong hindlegs, this streamlined desert dweller (significantly distinct from its ancestors, the coelurosaurs) burrows just beneath the sand to await prey. With only eyes and nose above ground, it leaps to the surface, surprising hapless insects, mice and scorpions.

LANK

Herbafagus longicollum

As tropical grasslands spread, some pterosaurs became grass eaters, lost the ability to fly and evolved front legs from wings; one wing-finger now supports animal's weight as a hoof, other is used for grooming.

HARRIDAN

Harpyia latala

Soaring between mountain peaks is another descendant of pterosaurs, the harridan. It circles on warm updrafts searching with its stereoscopic vision for its prey—small mammals. Wings are controlled additionally by membranes attached to second and third fingers. On the ground (left), wings fold up for comfortable walking

TARANTER

Herbasaurus armatus

Protective ankylosaurian armor is still-useful defensive device, as are horny spikes in this slow-moving grazing animal of the steppe grasslands. Horny head-covering forms sharp edge at the beak.

TREE HOPPER

Arbrosaurus bernardi

Various arbrosaur species appear on all continents, having evolved from the small coelurosaurs. The tropical-forest tree hopper has stiff balancing tail, long toenails for ripping bark in search of insects.

GWANNA

Gryllusaurus flavus

In the huge, dry grasslands of the Australian continent the gwanna travels in family groups of up to five adults and their young. Roaming across great distances in search of fresh grazing pastures, it walks its usual pace. But when danger comes it leaps for safety. Bright-blue head crests are for attracting mates, while thumb spike is used to fight enemies.

NON-CRESTED SPRINTOSAUR

Vexillosaurus levipes

Herds of sprintosaurs travel on the open plains of the North American continent; often only their flaglike tails can be seen above the tall grasses.

GESTALT

Formisaura delacasa

Most unusual among the dinosaur groups is the gestalt, which lives a communal existence. Females build and repair nests of tunnels and chambers; males stand guard. Older males become breeders, servicing queen, which lays one egg a day. Young gestalts gather buds, nuts and fruits for the colony.

POUCH

Saccosaurus spp.

In Australian rivers several species of pouch (differentiated only by their colorful tail patterns) live an amphibious existence. Mud-and-stick nests dot the riverbanks where land-dwelling juveniles remain until their bodies mature. Adept at fishing, adults store catch in membranous bag under lower jaw.

CRIBRUM

Cribrusarus rubicundus

Cribrum is pink while feeding in salt water but changes to light gray in fresh water. A coelurosaurian descendant, it feeds by sweeping head through the shallows, grazing for algae, which pass through sievelike jaws.

PLUNGER

Pinala fusiforme

Though most comfortable in water, plunger (right) will bask in sun on ocean rocks, never venturing beyond areas where fish are readily available.

SOAR

Cicollum angustalum

Holding 13-foot wings high behind its back, graceful soar plunges long neck into ocean for fish, never wetting its wings.

SIFT

Pterocolum rubicundum

Wading through the shallow waters of the swamps and river deltas of North America is the sift, which feeds on shrimp, worms caught with its long, narrow jaws. A pterosaurian descendant, it has retained most of its ancestor's features: lightweight body, wings of membrane and flexible neck.

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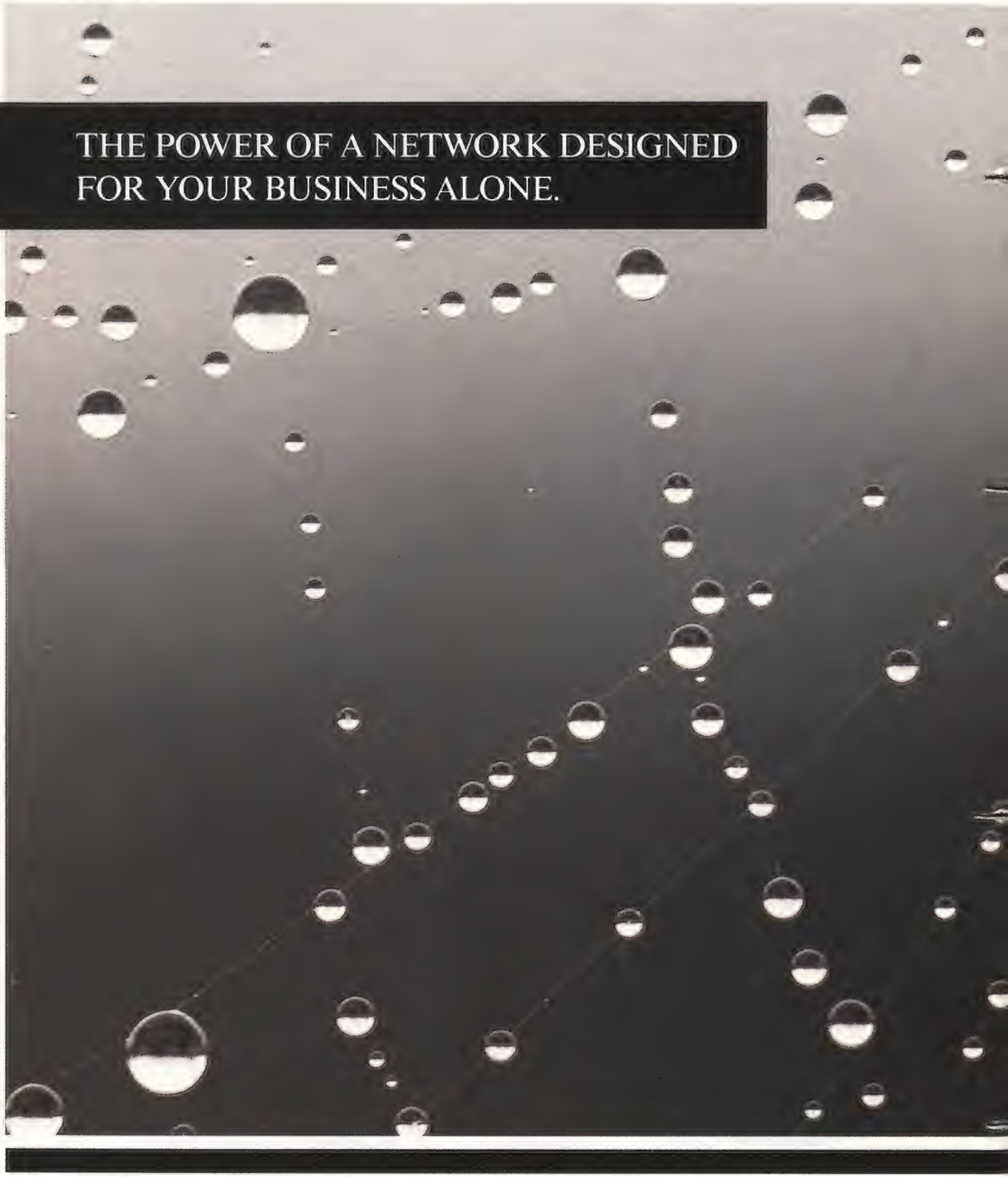

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THE POWER IS ON

By Richard Kostelanetz

Clumper upper to wok dumper to chute to helix to block

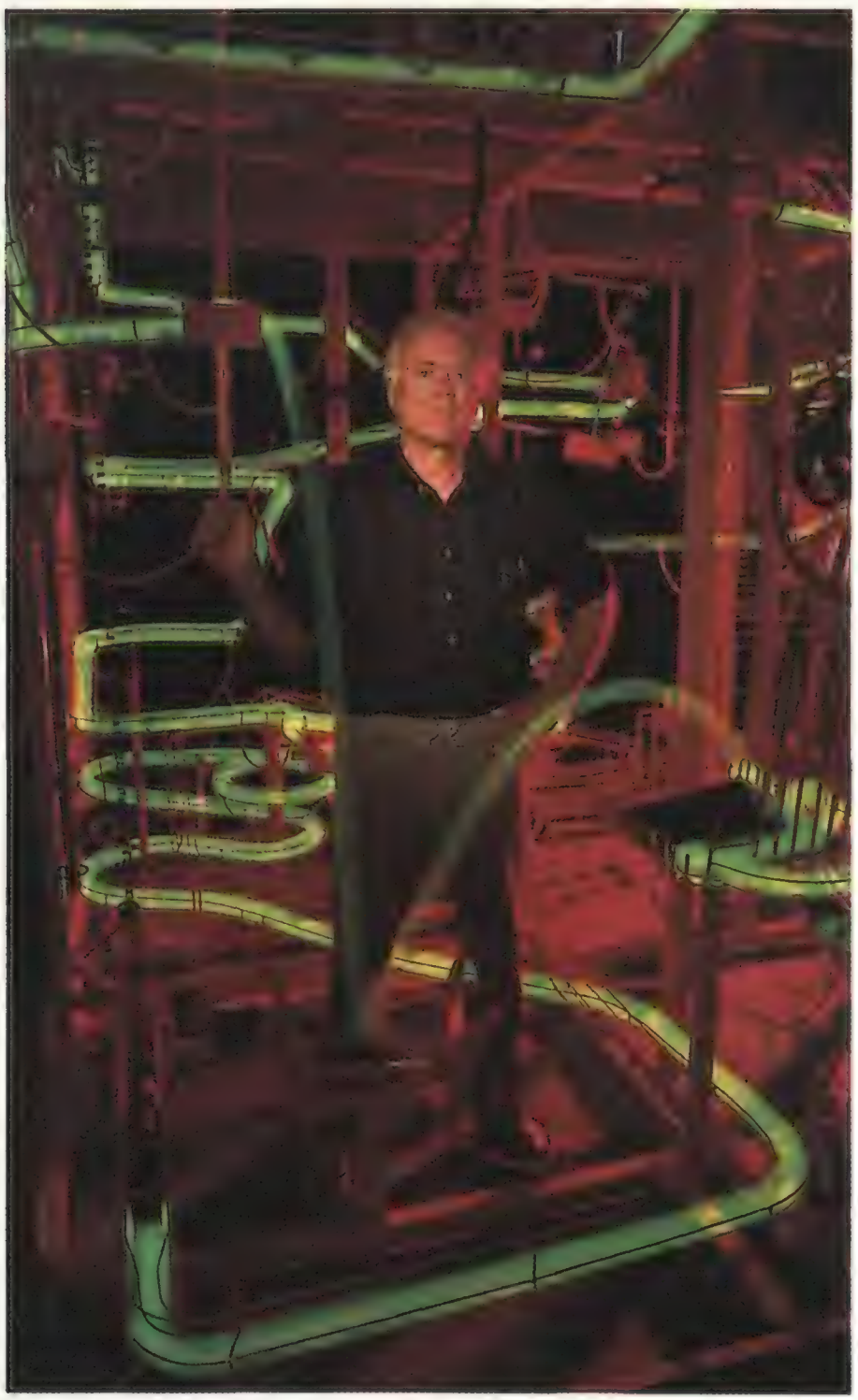
The paths taken by George Rhoads' flashing little sound-making balls are varied and magical, making art of hypnotic movement

They've been showing up all over North America these past few years—these intriguing machines with acrobatic balls that move around metal tracks and make noises as they go. There's a highly conspicuous, popular one called *42nd Street Ballroom* in the Port Authority Bus Terminal in New York City. There are two in Terminal C at Boston's Logan International Airport and two more in the mammoth West Edmonton Mall in Alberta. You can also encounter them in shopping centers in New Haven, Connecticut; Pittsfield, Massachusetts; Rochester and Watertown, New York; and Kamloops, British Columbia, among other places in North America. There is a big one in the Boston Museum of Science, and there was in the recent past a gallery full of them at the Queens Museum in Flushing Meadow on Long Island. To the man who made them, artist George Rhoads, they are "audio-kinetic sculptures" that generate sounds as they move.

Gathered around them, tracing the trajectories, are children of all ages. "The rest of the world is blocked out while you are watching it" is a common response: for though individual moves in these machines are simple and clear, from the multiplicity and interconnections comes a complexity that requires concentration to be understood; these sculptures do not exhaust

Ten organ pipes and such things as a loop-the-loop and a square wheel help make up *Having a Ball.*

Photographs by Wayne Sorce



Master of all he conveys, Rhoads steps into *Pelota Pagoda*, a mall piece for Guam, in the Ithaca studio.

attention quickly. Another element of the Rhoads experience is watching the expression on the faces of others, especially of real children, because, as the artist puts it, in pieces for public spaces "the best stuff takes place at kid level."

It is hard to imagine what kind of person created these. My first thoughts were that George Rhoads must be a young man who had barely outgrown a fascination with erector sets and that he lived in a stainless-steel, high-tech environment. The surprises are that he is 62, was born in Chicago, is the son of a prominent internist, and now lives rustically in Ithaca, in central New York. Tall, trimly built, he is a modest man who favors loose shirts, sweatpants and thong sandals. He looks like a high school physical education teacher nearing retirement. Three years ago he moved into a little farmhouse on the edge of the college town. "I'm glad I came to this area," he says. "It's the right distance from New York City. It's a five-hour drive; when you have to go, it's not bad."

Rhoads remembers growing up in suburban Evanston, where he took private art lessons and wanted to be a painter; but he also learned from looking at the clocks at the famed Museum of Science and Industry. "What I particularly enjoyed was an exhibit of clock escapements. They were enlarged so that you could see how each one worked." Escapements, he explains, are mechanisms that drive the clock's pendulum and determine the position of its hands.

In 1943, Rhoads studied painting at the Art Institute of Chicago (SMITHSONIAN, August 1988) and then in Paris. In New York City, he worked sporadically at the kinds of free-lance jobs favored by some struggling artists—medical illustration, house painting and furniture moving. Through a gallery and on his own, he sold paintings into the '60s, most of them expressionistic urban landscapes and trompe l'oeil. Some of these, according to his own records, were purchased by Laurence Tisch and Leonard Bernstein.

This George of all trades

The painter Herby Katzman remembers Rhoads 30 years ago as "a damn good painter who also knew how to take apart and put together watches. He could do building construction." Around this time Rhoads also met Hans Van de Bovenkamp, a Dutch-born artist then living in the West Village, who was involved in sculpting fountains. Teaching himself metal welding, Rhoads began to make his own kinetic fountains, which recycled water through gravity-based systems similar to those he has since used with rolling balls. Between two and six feet high, these sold for a few thousand dollars apiece. "George is an absolutely wonderful genius," Van de Bovenkamp says; "he's a practi-

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"Nothing but time passing,
the blue and white
line of the sea-sand,
the ocean."

Pablo Neruda

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THE BAYS OF HUATULCO

Paradise Found

42nd Street Ballroom has drawn polyglot crowds at New York's Port Authority Terminal ever since it was installed in 1983. Eight-foot cube with Plexiglas cover is a glowing conglomeration of sight and sound.

cal visionary in the sense that he can have an idea and think it through." Rhoads plans to return to kinetic water fountains, perhaps with a limited edition of an exquisitely simple sculpture with a pump, four moving parts and a stationary network of descending trays. The example in his own living room can also function as a humidifier.

In the late '60s, David Bermant, a shopping mall magnate, began commissioning the first of more than two dozen Rhoads pieces for his own collection of kinetic art and for installation in his malls, where they had secondary, "baby-sitting" functions.

Through the 1970s and into his own 50s, Rhoads worked on creating new devices for his kinetic sculptures. During this period he met Bob McGuire, a local reading teacher now in his early 40s, who had briefly studied engineering as an undergraduate. McGuire became Rhoads' principal "fabricator" and today is his business associate.

For a visual artist currently so prominent, Rhoads has had a remarkably slight gallery career. "He was always an introvert," Van de Bovenkamp remembers, "low-key, shy about selling." He has had only a half-dozen one-man shows in New York City, the most recent nearly a decade ago (where no sculptures were sold); and there have been only three museum shows devoted exclusively to his work, two in upstate New York and the other in Queens. There is no catalog devoted to his art and no critical literature more significant than short newspaper and magazine articles. He has never received any grants for his art; he has never won any competitions for public art, although from time to time he submits slides of his work for adjudication. A painter I know who has been affiliated with the Cornell University art department for nearly two decades told me that she'd "never heard of him" until

Visual-audio artist Richard Kostelanetz lives in New York. He is the author of Metamorphosis in the Arts *and editor of the book* Esthetics Contemporary.

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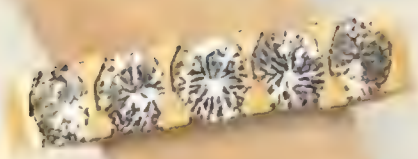
(But those who say that are married to someone else.)



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George Rhoads' clockwork mélange

recently, and the only artists long-familiar with his name seem to be those likewise involved in technological art. Instead of showing his art in galleries, he went public, so to speak, and out of a ne'er-do-well career came sudden success.

Some Rhoads audiokinetic sculptures are more complicated than others, but they all share several elements. Near the top of a typical Rhoads machine is a ball distributor—sometimes it's a pendulum switch, sometimes a rotating disk, sometimes a pin board that feeds the initial supply of balls onto several tracks. Depending upon how a ball hits its distributor, it can be sent down one or more skeletal ramps into helixes or loop-the-loops. As it goes it strikes noisemaking devices such as bells or a xylophone or pieces of metal.

Rhoads and Bob McGuire discuss trajectory of balls in piece destined for Forest Fair Mall, Cincinnati.

With more than one path running from top to bottom, several balls can be moving at once, and while the sequence of sounds down each path is more or less fixed, the combinations of noises are various. "You might call it semirandom," he explains.

As the rate at which the balls are released can vary, the sculpture is sometimes considerably busier than other times. When the balls hit bottom, they are gathered into a chute where a motorized chain hoist carries them to the top for another trip. Because the hooks on the chain are unevenly spaced, with clusters of them followed by empty spaces, Rhoads ensures that the flow of balls downward will be variable—now with many, now with only a few. As with a roller coaster, external power is applied to assist the process only in getting the balls back to the top; otherwise, all the action depends strictly upon old Mother Gravity, the principal co-conspirator in his art.

Rhoads' works, however, vary in structure and in complexity. Some he calls "wall pieces" because they have a front and a back, and are thus meant to be placed against a wall. But most, by contrast, are meant to be viewed from several sides, as is the grandest of them all, *Ball City*, 10 feet square, 24 feet high, his first installation in Alberta's West Edmonton Mall.

Two qualities they all share are that, in contrast to other artistic machines, their action is infinitely various and entirely visible. Because the decisions of the distributors can be so random, there are no cycles of comprehensibly repeated activity, as in some other artistic machines, but instead, endless variation. On the visibility issue, Rhoads refuses to use electronics because the energy would thus be hidden. "Machines are interesting to everybody," he says, "but people usually don't understand them because, as in a gasoline engine, the fun part goes on inside the cylinder. So I've restricted myself to mechanisms that you can see and understand quickly." In this emphasis on preelectronic machines (and in, say, his reluctance to use acoustic amplifiers), Rhoads remains an old-fashioned technological artist; from the strictly technical point of view, his sculptural machines could have been constructed a century ago.

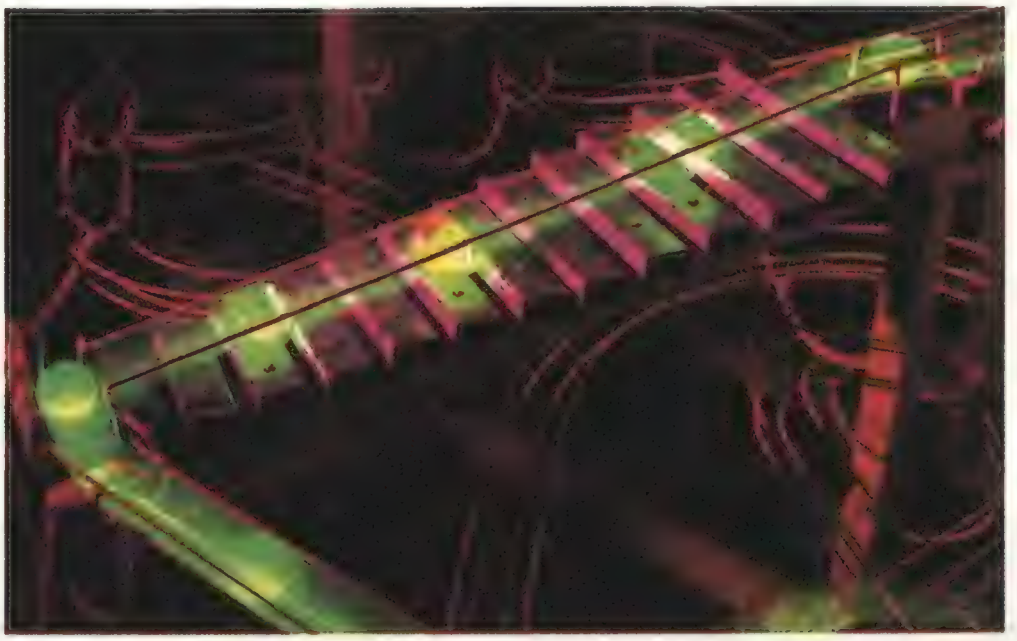
"Nobody vandalizes what everybody loves"

What Rhoads has realized is a popular, public art, sculptures that are capable of holding the attention of nearly everyone without sacrificing the complexity that marks their esthetic integrity. At Logan Airport, where there are two in sight of each other, one more complex than the other, the more complex one always draws a larger audience. When *42nd Street Ballroom* was first installed, there was fear that it might be vandalized, or its plastic case defaced; but even in the Port Authority

Movable art from cast-off parts

Helix, named after the biological model, is in fact constructed from piece of an auger.

The ball in this loop-the-loop is traveling from left to right—and it's just about to take off for a catch basket.



Ball, at the top right, begins its musical descent along a tinkling-chimes stairway, a sound that's as clear as a brook.

Restaurant wok is used as a catchment. Balls spin 'round and 'round, then exit.

Three-tier pendulum (right) is activated by five balls.

Ingenious bounce-and-catch is like a tiny trampoline.

Bus Terminal, notorious as it is for both crowds and "loony tunes," that has not happened. "Nobody vandalizes what everybody loves," one artist explained.

These sculptures seem to reflect the mobiles of Alexander Calder on the one hand, and the fantastic contraptions of cartoonist Rube Goldberg on the other. In the first respect, they are kinetic, with plenty of moving parts; in the second, they are elaborate machines with an abundance of comic moves, producing nothing other than the pleasure that comes from observing their operation. Among the esthetic influences on his own art Rhoads acknowledges Calder, "whom I'd always known about," and Jean Tinguely, the Swiss-born kinetic sculptor.

"I've known about Rube Goldberg for a long time," Rhoads says while rolling his own cigarette from pipe tobacco. "I related to the goofiness of his work, the unexpected event, the unlikely combination of elements. His drawings are real wacky, true nonsense—which is never as big in America as in Britain. But you can't actually make the things that Goldberg drew; that's a severe limitation." Rhoads also acknowledges the influences of such "folk art" as roller coasters (especially the large, scary one called "The Bobs" that used to be at River View Park in Chicago) and carousels (a current favorite being "the big one in Balboa Park in San Diego").

The real innovation of his mature art was to be his use of the little ball, which, like water, would not only respond to gravity but would also be more controllable (and, as Bob McGuire puts it, "less messy"). Rhoads designed a series of devices for handling rolling balls, from metal tracking to several kinds of distributors, and then the objects through which the balls could pass in resounding ways. Certain elements reappear in different guises: the helix, or vertical spiral, and the loop-the-loop, which usually propels the balls at great speed into a sound producer mounted above a catch basket. There is also a basket in the "bounce-and-catch" routine, where the ball is allowed to fall onto a plate from which it bounces up into the basket.

The "stairway of chimes" appears, too, in various forms, including a succession of cowbells in *Magic Clock II*, which stood for a couple of years in the main terminal of La Guardia, and the xylophone in *42nd Street Ballroom* that rings out "East Side, West Side." Then there are "dumpers" that customarily won't move until they collect several balls, and the "rock back" that catches a single ball and tilts back with it before returning it to one of the tracks. And a "wrap-around with tinkle," as Rhoads calls it. There is even a curious device, the "clumper upper," for feeding balls into the loop-the-loops. As the balls roll down their tracks, they usually trip switches that in turn strike noisemakers or make something else move, such as a miniature windmill. Near the bottom is often a wok, into

Absorbing effect of Rhoads' mechanical universe is evident in scenes at Boston Museum of Science where artist's contention, "the best stuff takes place at kid level," is borne out—but not at expense of older folk.

which the balls fall, making resonant sounds not only when they land but as they circle about. The sound and motion in this simple vessel are instantly pleasing.

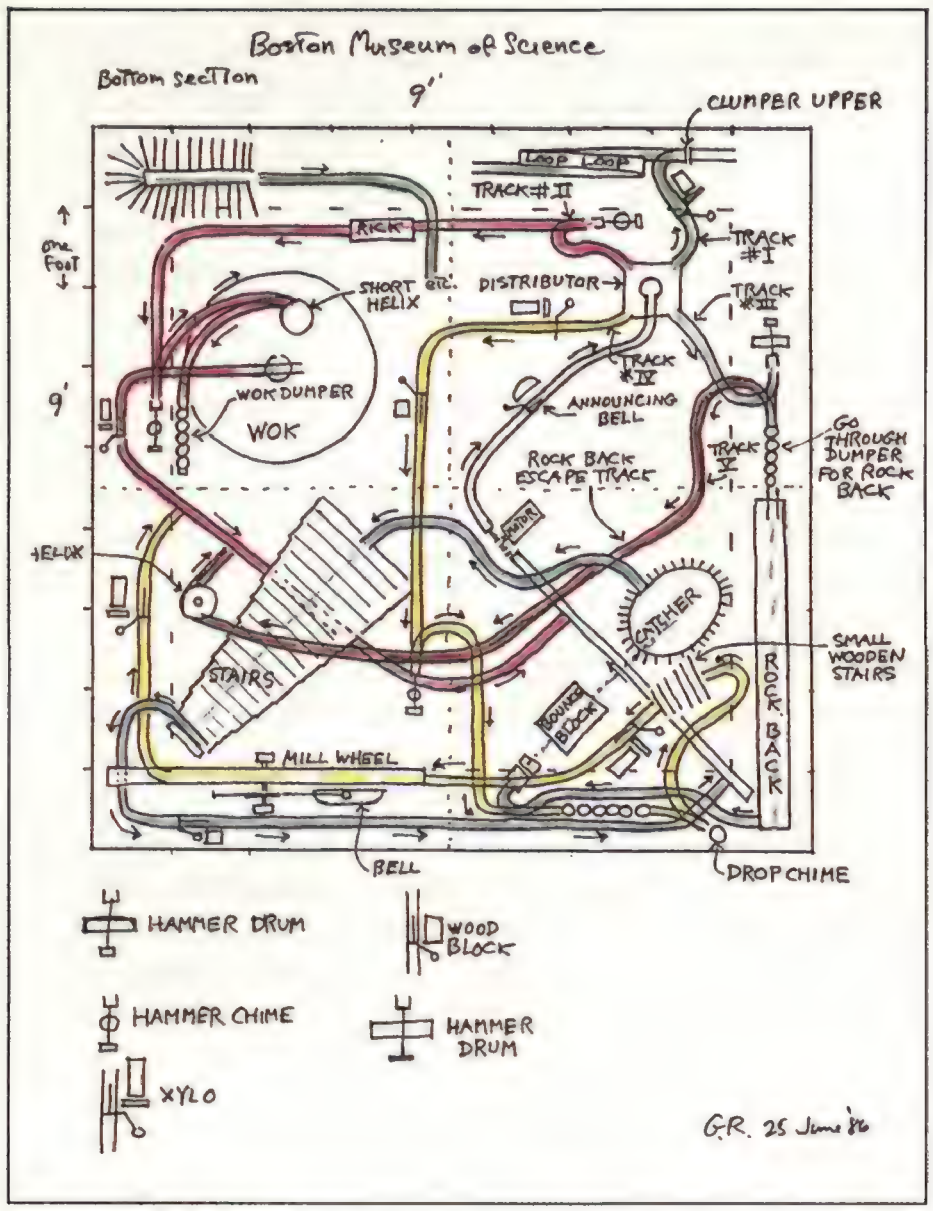
James Seawright, director of the Visual Arts Program at Princeton University, compares Rhoads' sculptures to textile mills. "There's a level of mechanical genius behind the inventing of complex mechanisms; that's what George has. His kinetic sculptures act in an amazing variety of ways, the balls going from one part of the track to another, suddenly turning corners. A group of balls will collect in a dumper, and all but one will go off in one direction, while that extra ball goes off on its own and does something else. These machines embody almost every basic element of machinery, but the elements are combined in a bewildering variety of ways. You look at one of his pieces and get a sense of overall design, but then you must trace out the details for yourself. The enjoyment comes from seeing your expectations fulfilled."

Rhoads discounts the myth of himself as a technological genius: "I know zilch about electronics. I can't fix my car anymore; I wouldn't even try. I really wanted to be a composer, but I couldn't do it. I didn't have enough training. I didn't have the ability." What's his favorite music? "Mozart's Tenth Serenade for Woodwinds; it used to be the Clarinet Quintet." His favorite films? "Monty Python's *Life of Brian* is my favorite movie at the moment, but all the Monty Python films are good. Certain Buster Keaton pictures. Steve Martin's a supreme comedian." His favorite theater? "Musicals with dancing and singing." This love of musicals reminds me that *42nd Street Ballroom*, for example, is extremely choreographic, able in its theatricality to compete with the nearby shows on Broadway. (And, thanks to the Port Authority, the Rhoads show is free.)

To Rhoads, the content of his work is indeed theatrical: "Balls having fun doing different things. Later you perceive the organization and the cycles and the sequences. People keep saying, 'Wouldn't it be great if you could have seats inside the ball and travel down the track yourself!' "

Abstract though these works essentially are, they are always on the verge of representing something. A woman beside me watching *42nd Street Ballroom* compared it to her 4-year-old daughter, "full of activity and out of control." When I mentioned this interpretation to Rhoads, he replied, "But they're not out of control. They are allowed latitude, but not too much. Otherwise, the balls would fall on the floor." He continued, "Nothing is represented, but you could think of different interpretations. The main one I thought of earlier was that the balls are the soul going through incarnations. Start with birth at the top and death at the bottom. So each time the ball goes through, it goes a different way; it does different things. It's a model of

Directly above, closely watched by kids, is dumper, colored green. Wok is in foreground. At center is the stairway of chimes, seen by fascinated boy through mill wheel. At right, the dumper appears once again.



The design for a Rhoads audiokinetic work suggests—and not by accident—a Rube Goldberg cartoon.

human existence—a model of collective existence, the picture of many souls in the Universe, or one soul in a succession of incarnations."

He reached for a book he had recently borrowed from the local library, Isaac Bashevis Singer's *Shosha*, and directed me to a page where Singer's narrator is attributing certain ideas to the Scottish philosopher David Hume: "Since we are sure of nothing and there is even no evidence that the sun will rise tomorrow, play is the very essence of human endeavor, perhaps even the thing-in-itself. God is a player, the cosmos a playground. For years I have searched for a basis of ethics and gave up hope. Suddenly it became clear to me. The basis of ethics is man's right to play the games of his choice. I will not trample on your toys and you will not trample on mine; I won't spit on your idol and you will not spit on mine."

One charm of Rhoads' audiokinetic sculptures is that they don't announce themselves as Art; their informality makes them more appropriate for public spaces than for art museums. People gathered around them are likely to ask one another, "What is this, a game or something?" I remember once telling an editor about a great work of art within two blocks of his office (on Manhattan's West 43rd Street). "There's no great work of art around here," he replied gruffly. "Sure there is," was my retort. "Where?" he challenged me. "In the Port Authority Bus Terminal," I replied, "the thing with the balls." Without a pause he fired back, "Oh that! That's a masterpiece."

It is in the public spaces that Rhoads has since installed his very best works. *Tower of Babel* in Kamloops is the tallest and in many ways the most ambitious, including new elements such as a large counting mechanism. In common with another new piece for a Plattsburgh, New York, shopping center, *Tower of Babel* has three distinct levels of activity. The piece at the Allendale Shopping Center (pp.134-35) seems the richest to me, with lots of devices so far unique to it. Golf balls go up a clear tube into a stainless-steel catching basket before spiraling down a helix into a complex of switches and dumpers that, as they move, release the stops on organ pipes, whose sustained sounds thus become a counterpoint to the traditional clinking of Rhoads' pieces. Descriptions are scarcely adequate in portraying such activities, which are best seen to be believed.

Global Circus, initially made in 1985, was recently refurbished for installation at World Expo '88 in Brisbane, Australia. It was tested for a thousand hours of flawless functioning before being sent out. (The principal problem was balls jumping their tracks, so a slow-speed video camera was trained on the machine, and the floor below it was covered with sand so that McGuire and his assistants could see exactly where the delinquent balls fell.)

The other colossuses of Rhoads

These sculptures hardly exhaust the record of Rhoads' inventiveness. Outside McGuire's house is a "pendulum swing," which has not only a chair suspended below but two pendulums extending up into the air. The movement of the lower pendulum (the swing) causes the top ones to rock in ways that can be felt by the person in the seat. "It's like resonance in music," the artist explains. In Rhoads' own backyard recently lay a "hula pole," back from a Chicago shopping center to be repaired. It has switches that spectators can use to control the motions, either rotary or rocking, of each of four different parts, in sum producing gyrations comparable to those of a hula dancer. Also supine in Rhoads' backyard was a 30-foot-high helix with soccer balls. In his guest room was a ball clock that strikes the hours; a foot or so high, a few feet wide, it could become the prototype for an edition. In David Bermant's bedroom in Rye, New York, is *Blue*

Shamrock (1986) with five spinning circular structures, two of them moving around the others. Bermant, who graduated from Yale in 1940, commissioned *Boola Boola,* an audiokinetic sculpture in which a ball, inserted at the top, strikes xylophone keys that ring out the Eli refrain before hitting bottom.

In the Queens Museum show was *Splendule* (1980), which had a little ball suspended from the end of a string, itself attached to a pole that is cleverly turned in eccentric ways by motors moving at three different speeds. As the ball spins around, it hits one of several chimes at random, resulting in an aleatory music considerably less noisy than is usual in Rhoads' work. Outside the Wadsworth Atheneum in Hartford is a motorless "windamajig," a pure mobile of wind-driven cones that rotate on several axes, tripping hammers to sound chimes. A "rotomabob," recently installed on a Manhattan penthouse porch, has a circular pattern of cones suspended from an axis pole that holds a plate at the top. As the wind hits the plate, the whole thing tilts on a single universal joint.

"What I want to do now is introduce mechanical elements other than rolling balls. I want to do things with gears, levers and cams. I just invented a mechanical arm that moves a ball in a quarter-circle and then places it on a higher track. The arm is operated by cams attached to a motor. It's fun to see because you can watch how the arm is directed by a cam. I got this idea from an old doughnut machine, where the arm takes a doughnut out of the oil and then flips it over before it moves it back in. Now all this kind of motion is done by electronics," Rhoads says.

He and McGuire have created a business structure that is rather unusual in the history of contemporary art. Essentially, McGuire owns Rock Stream Studios, while Rhoads is a "designer working on commission." Rock Stream Studios is responsible for everything—for making the sculptures, for installing them, for maintaining them. It reminded me of Buckminster Fuller's admonition that whenever he founded a company he always included a device for getting out of it in case it became too successful and consumed too much of his attention and energies. "I wasn't thinking in terms of a company," Rhoads told me, when I mentioned Fuller to him. "We were thinking how best to arrange business matters, so I'd be more free." What Rhoads ultimately wants for himself is a daily-work situation that allows him to paint or write or draw, while those machines bearing his unique creative stamp continue to appear across the land.

Rhoads fabricated *Archimedean Excogitation,* based on plan opposite, for Boston Museum of Science.

Friday at the races in Sussex.

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Observed in Philadelphia.

"Naturally, I lost my shirt. Why should this year be any different?"

"Was Enid there?"

"With her new husband, Mr. Tall and Witty."

"Did she talk about me?"

"Not exactly. But I did detect a note of tragic longing in her eyes."

"Maybe she bet as badly as you did."

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History fails to record that Jefferson ever wore an anti-John Adams T-shirt, but starting with the Founding Fathers in 1800, verbal abuse was all too common during Presidential campaigns.

By Eileen Shields West

'Give 'em hell' these days is a figure of speech

Whatever is wrong with the Presidential campaigns on TV, they have not become more rude or savage. Quite the reverse!

This has been the year of the Seven Democratic Dwarfs and alleged wimpery, of demands for medical and military records, of titillated talk about monkey business afloat and lamentation at the cruelty of one campaign aide for blowing the whistle on oral plagiarism committed on TV. The race for the Presidency is getting too nasty, some people aver, and there is a tendency to blame it on what is seen as a tasteless and permissive age.

But whatever is wrong with American political campaigns, they have not become more salacious or more savage. Quite the reverse. "What respectable person today," political expert Paul Boller jr. asks, "would think of calling one of the candidates for the highest office in the land a carbuncled-faced old drunkard? Or a howling atheist?" Or, for that matter, "a pickpocket, thief, traitor, lecher, syphilitic, gorilla, anarchist, murderer"? Nobody, of course. When the Senate minority leader, Robert Dole, asked Vice President George Bush to stop lying about his (Dole's) political record, the country's pundits acted as if Dole had practically frothed at the mouth.

But in the good (or bad) old days, Dole's comment would have been the height of politesse. Starting with the Founding Fathers (Washington excepted), candidates for the Presidency or their cohorts verbally assaulted each other in ways today not only unspeakable but virtually unthinkable. Verbal violence during Presidential campaigns was as American as apple pie. President Martin Van Buren, for example, was charged with wearing corsets and taking more baths than a real man should. As late as 1888, trying to give folks back home an idea of what a Yankee political campaign was like, Britain's Lord Bryce described it as a "tempest of invective and calumny. . . . Imagine all the accusations brought against all the candidates for the 670 seats in the English Parliament," he wrote, "concentrated on one man, and read . . . daily for three months."

Starting in the election of 1800 (John Adams versus Thomas Jefferson) campaign songs appeared, too. By 1840, when plebeian beginnings in a log cabin appealed to the mob, the first full-scale campaign songbook helped the Whig candidate, William Henry Harrison, the hero of the Battle of Tippecanoe, defeat Van Buren by transforming Harrison from a Virginia aristocrat (who owned a Georgian mansion and sipped gentleman's whiskey) into a popular, log-cabin-dwelling, hard-cider-swigging hillbilly.

"He's a little squirt-wirt-wirt"

The tunefully reinforced image caught on and, try as they might, the Democrats could never discredit it, nor expunge another song-inspired inference that their own hapless candidate, President Van Buren, was a pantywaist. Democratic protests were drowned out by rousing choruses of "Old Tip he wears a homespun coat / He has no ruffled shirt-wirt-wirt / But Mat has the golden plate / And he's a little squirt-wirt-wirt." The wirt-wirts were embellished by spitting (usually tobacco juice) through the singer's teeth. It was that kind of campaign year. Out in Illinois a lawyer named Lincoln, running for the state legislature, could (and did) reach over to rip open his Democratic opponent's tightly buttoned cloth coat to reveal the ruffled silk shirt and velvet vest hidden beneath.

By then, political campaigning had become a staple of American entertainment. Politics is "the only pleasure an American knows," Alexis de Tocqueville wrote. "Even the women frequently attend public meetings and listen to political harangues as a recreation from their household labors." Men, and presumably women too, though they were 80 years from the vote, were

Illustrations by Jeff MacNelly

In his 1828 campaign against Andrew Jackson, President John Quincy Adams was accused of being a shameless gambler simply because he had once purchased a secondhand billiard table for use of guests.

mightily interested in the goings-on of the 1840 campaign, which notably contributed to what Lord Bryce would call the "booming" quality of American politics. The "boom," Bryce thought, struck the "imagination of those who in country hamlets read of the doings in the great city." American elections, Bryce held, were largely a matter of "booming."

More eligible voters (80 percent of about 2.4 million) cast their ballots in the 1840 campaign than had ever voted in a Presidential election, sweeping Harrison into office. It wasn't the public's fault that he was 68 years old, delivered an interminable Inaugural speech without a hat or coat, then died of pneumonia a month later. And though the rudeness of booming is now deplored, during the last half of the 19th century, when booming and outrageous incivility were at their peak, 75 to 85 percent of the electorate voted.

That figure compares sadly with all our recent elections when barely 50 percent of the eligible voters managed to get to the polls to choose the President. Every four years the experts sit around wondering why this is so. But most agree with political writer David Broder that Presidential campaigns, "whether or not they appeal to the mind at all, they don't stir people at the gut level the way they used to."

More than anything else, television gets blamed for what it has done to candidates and conventions, where the press seems to outnumber the politicians a thousand to one, and everybody grows accustomed to candidates trying to say as little as possible in answer to the same questions, asked again and again. Whatever the cause, a trip back to some of the most vicious campaigns—a time when libel suits were rare and incivility was in fine flower—provides a useful and diverting perspective.

By 1800, the aura that had somewhat protected the justly sacrosanct figure of George Washington had already given way to savage partisanship. His two terms were followed by one term for John Adams, a plump,

Washingtonian Eileen Shields West is collaborating on a book about U.S. Presidential campaigns with Pulitzer Prize-winning cartoonist Jeff MacNelly, creator of the nationally syndicated comic strip Shoe.

brilliant but sometimes silly man who loved grand titles and was secretly mocked by enemies as "His Rotundity." The system of electoral votes, since modified, played strange tricks in the early Presidential races, especially since the candidate who came in second became Vice President. During his term (1797-1801), Adams was derided as the "President by three votes," because in 1796 he received only 71 electoral votes (to rival Jefferson's 68). When the Federalists chose to run Adams again, with Gen. Charles Cotesworth Pinckney of South Carolina as his running mate, the new Republican Party ran Jefferson with Aaron Burr.

"Head itching for a crowny"

The agrarian, egalitarian Republicans (who gradually became what history knows as Jeffersonian Democrats) swiftly spread a rumor that President Adams planned to marry one of his sons to the daughter of George III in order to start an American dynasty with economic ties to England. Comic rumor even had it that George Washington himself got Adams to change his mind by donning his Revolutionary uniform and threatening to run him through with his patriot's sword. "See Johnny at the helm of State," Jeffersonians chorused, "Head itching for a crowny, / He longs to be, like Georgy, great, / And pulls Tom Jeffer downy!"

Adams had a sharp tongue. He once referred to Alexander Hamilton, his party's brilliant Secretary of the Treasury, as the "bastard brat of a Scotch pedlar." But under Republican onslaughts he often managed to stay cool. When it was put about that he had sent Pinckney to England in a U.S. frigate to procure four pretty girls as mistresses—for them both—Adams genially replied: "I do declare upon my honor, if this be true General Pinckney has cheated me out of my two."

Other Federalists fought back, questioning Jefferson's courage during the Revolution, mocking him as a dilettante inventor who dreamed up nothing but "Gim-Krackery." But that was the high road compared to this biographical précis of the sage of Monticello: "Tom Jefferson . . . a mean-spirited, low-lived fellow, the son of a half-breed Indian squaw, sired by a Virginia mulatto father . . . raised wholly on hoe-cake made of coarse-ground Southern corn, bacon and hominy, with an occasional . . . fricasseed bullfrog." Were he elected, an editorial in the Federalist *Connecticut Courant* warned readers, "Murder, robbery, rape, adultery and incest will be openly taught and practiced."

In a land still largely agrarian, the Republicans had won the support of country folk and (thanks largely to Jefferson's friend James Madison) were better organized. Even so, history records a neck-and-neck election result and bitter finagling because of the peculiar ground rules regarding the Presidency and the electoral votes. The two Republicans each got 73, Adams 65. This forced a runoff vote in the House of Representatives between Burr and Jefferson. On the 36th ballot, Jefferson was chosen. Federalists promptly cried "President by No Votes!" But the political power of the Northeast had been broken, at least for the moment. Years later a New York congressman mourned those good old days, "when a Federalist could knock a Republican down in the streets [of New York] and not be questioned about it."

In 1816 Gen. Andrew Jackson, surely one of the most combative men in American history, uncharacteristically wrote President-elect James Monroe, saying "Now is the time to exterminate the monster called party spirit." It was true that during the War of 1812, partisan loyalties, and to some extent sectional interests, had been submerged in a national desire to fight

President Martin Van Buren was mercilessly ragged about his size and supposed Royalist proclivities.

The campaign of 1840 became a propaganda war between homespun West and "highfalutin'" Easterners. Here, Abe Lincoln, running for the Illinois legislature, tears open opponent's cloth coat—to reveal silk and velvet beneath.

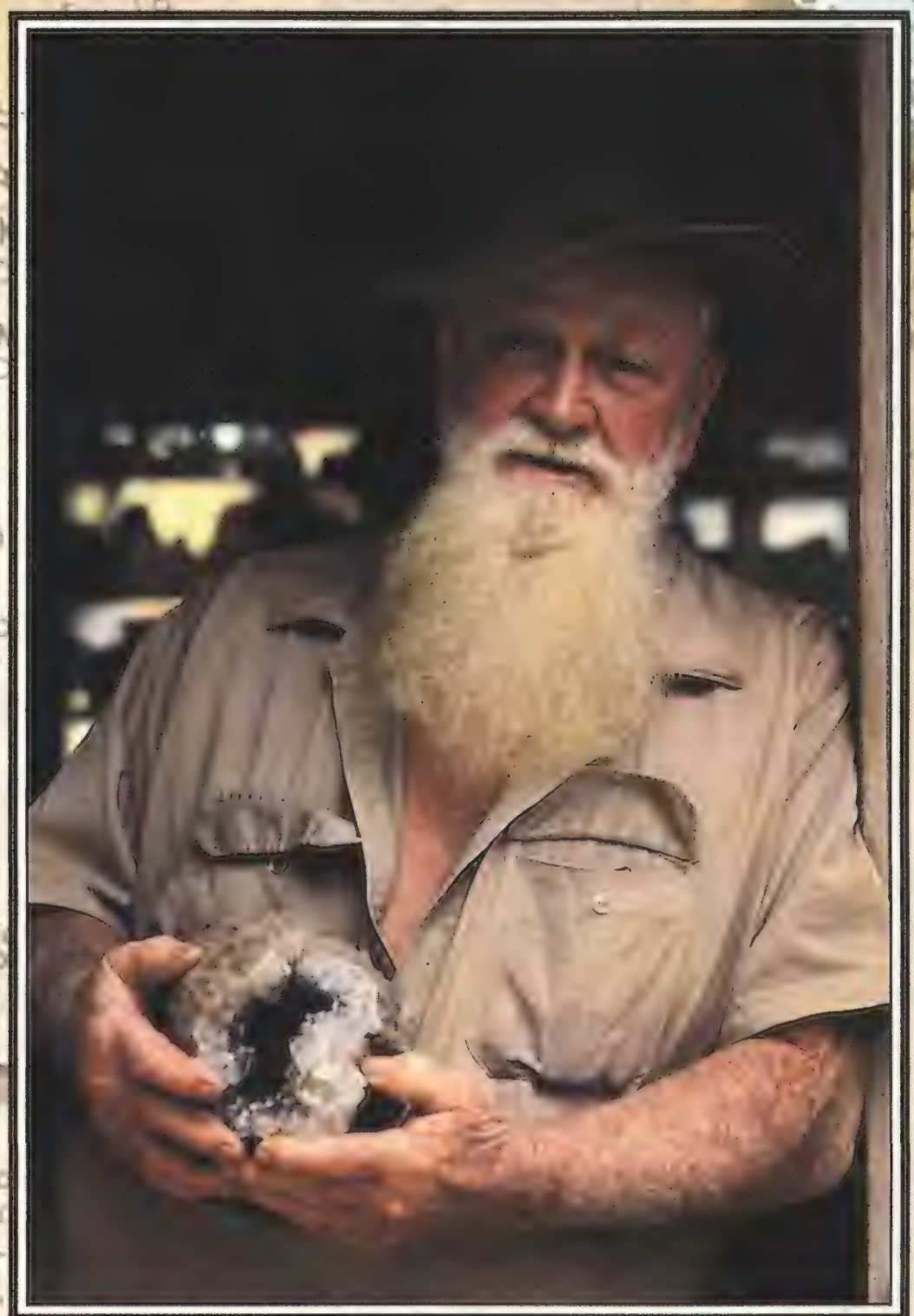
off the British. Americans felt good about themselves, as we would put it today, in part because of Jackson's astounding victory in the Battle of New Orleans. What has come to be known as the Era of Good Feelings was about to begin.

Largely thanks to Jackson, it did not last long. By 1824 he had run for President himself and got the most popular votes, only to be robbed, he thought, by the pesky Electoral College. In a runoff of the three leading candidates, the House of Representatives found itself having to choose between John Adams' diplomat son, John Quincy Adams; Secretary of the Treasury William Crawford; and Jackson. Henry Clay, Speaker of the House, had been eliminated and now used his influence to elect Adams.

What really stuck in Jackson's craw was, to him, the certain evidence that a deal had been struck between Adams and Clay, who was speedily appointed the new Secretary of State. Jacksonian anger at this "corrupt bargain," made, as he mildly put it, "by the Judas of the West" (Clay was from over the mountains in Kentucky), fueled the campaign of 1828. Adams' National Republicans, heirs to the old Federalists, stood for stronger central government, more federal expenditure and a higher tariff, but the issues took a backseat to a personality struggle between Adams, seen as an effete representative of Eastern power and privilege, and Old Hickory, a brawling, rough-tongued, frontier war hero, clearly a man of the people. The confrontation also helped create a new populist party, the Jackson Party, which swiftly became the new national Democratic Party. It also fueled a campaign almost too silly, too scurrilous to be believed.

Adams was a brilliant and dedicated public servant who rose at 5 each morning and worked pretty much without ceasing until 5 in the afternoon. But Democrats accused him of being a gambler because he once bought a secondhand billiard table for the White House. "When we find the fathers and mothers of our country . . . persuading young men from practices which lead to destruction," one Jacksonian editor soberly moralized, "we greatly fear that the too frequent answer will be, 'Why, the President plays billiards!'"

That was the polite part. They also asserted that the President and his wife had had premarital relations, and freely labeled him "The Pimp" on the strength of their unfounded charge that, during his term as ambassador to Russia (1809-14), Adams had procured an American girl for Czar Alexander I. Jackson was more vulnerable than Adams in this area, because he had been obliged to remarry his beloved wife Rachel when it turned out that her divorce (a scandal in itself) was not legal. He had to bear editorials and rhetorical speeches asking: "Ought a convicted adulteress and her paramour be placed in the highest offices of this free and Christian land?" Famous for a hot temper and



High upon Queensland's lush, rolling "Tableland" lies an area rich in gemstones, and the quiet retreat of a retired miner whose knowledge

of semi-precious stones is widely renowned.

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Down Under. It's down home to us.

Despite a brouhaha about illegitimate son, Grover Cleveland won a tight victory over crooked James G. Blaine in 1884. The conflict, as one worldly critic put it, was between the "copulative habits of one and the prevaricative habits of the other."

for executing men during his military campaigns, he ground his teeth and listened as gleeful Adams supporters sang: "Oh, Andy! Oh Andy, / How many men have you hanged in your life? / How many weddings make a wife?"

Beside such things, routine charges that his mother was a "COMMON PROSTITUTE, brought to this country by the British soldiers!" perhaps set the celebrated duelist's adrenaline flowing. Nothing deterred the rolling wave of Jackson people from street demonstrations, barbecues and, above all, innumerable plantings of Jackson's symbol, the hickory pole, in parks and on street corners all over the country. On November 4, 1828, just before the election, Jackson's people tore up the sidewalk in front of Tammany Hall and the pro-Adams *New-York Spectator* sneered, "The pole was erected amid loud yells . . . the beer-barrels were rolled out; and it required no vivid imagination to distinguish in the uproar the yell of the hyæna, the cry of the panther and the whoop of the Winnebagoes."

The turnout was heavy, three times larger than in 1824. Old Hickory won by a comfortable margin. His Inauguration party, with common folk overrunning the White House, breaking furniture, spitting tobacco juice in corners and leaving muddy footprints on the carpets, is regarded as a classic symbol of democracy triumphant. But it was not only Jackson's victory, but his practices as President which insured that savage campaign partisanship would continue in Presidential politics. Jackson increased the power of the Presidency enormously. Unlike Adams, Jackson threw his cronies into office, ushering in a full-scale spoils system that used patronage mercilessly for political purposes, thus strengthening the hold of Democrats on power and preference. So much for exterminating the monster called party spirit.

The scene shifts past the Civil War, when the issues of slavery and the survival of the Union were agonizing and profound. By 1884 Reconstruction was over, America was exploding westward, business was booming and it was open season on campaign madness again. Republicans (a far different party from that of 1800) favored a protective tariff higher than the Democrats, but otherwise there was little difference between the party platforms. It was time for a campaign of pure theater or, as one critic has put it, a contest between the "copulative habits of one and the prevaricative habits of the other."

The one was Democrat Grover Cleveland, a Buffalo lawyer who, in three years, had leapfrogged from being his city's mayor to the governorship of New York to Presidential candidacy. The other was Republican James Blaine from Maine, an ex-Congressman and former Secretary of State.

Cleveland was a bit rough around the edges, a man reputed to wash down his dinner with beer and then relieve himself out of the window of his law office. (He had once been sued, in fact, by a passer-by who got in the way.) Cleveland was stoutly honest, though, and as a politician he had made many of the right enemies.

The difference between a shattered windshield and a shattered life.

On November 17, 1986, the car in which Tara Meyer was riding was in an accident. Unfortunately, she wasn't wearing her seat belt. So like 150,000 other victims each year, her head hit and shattered the windshield.

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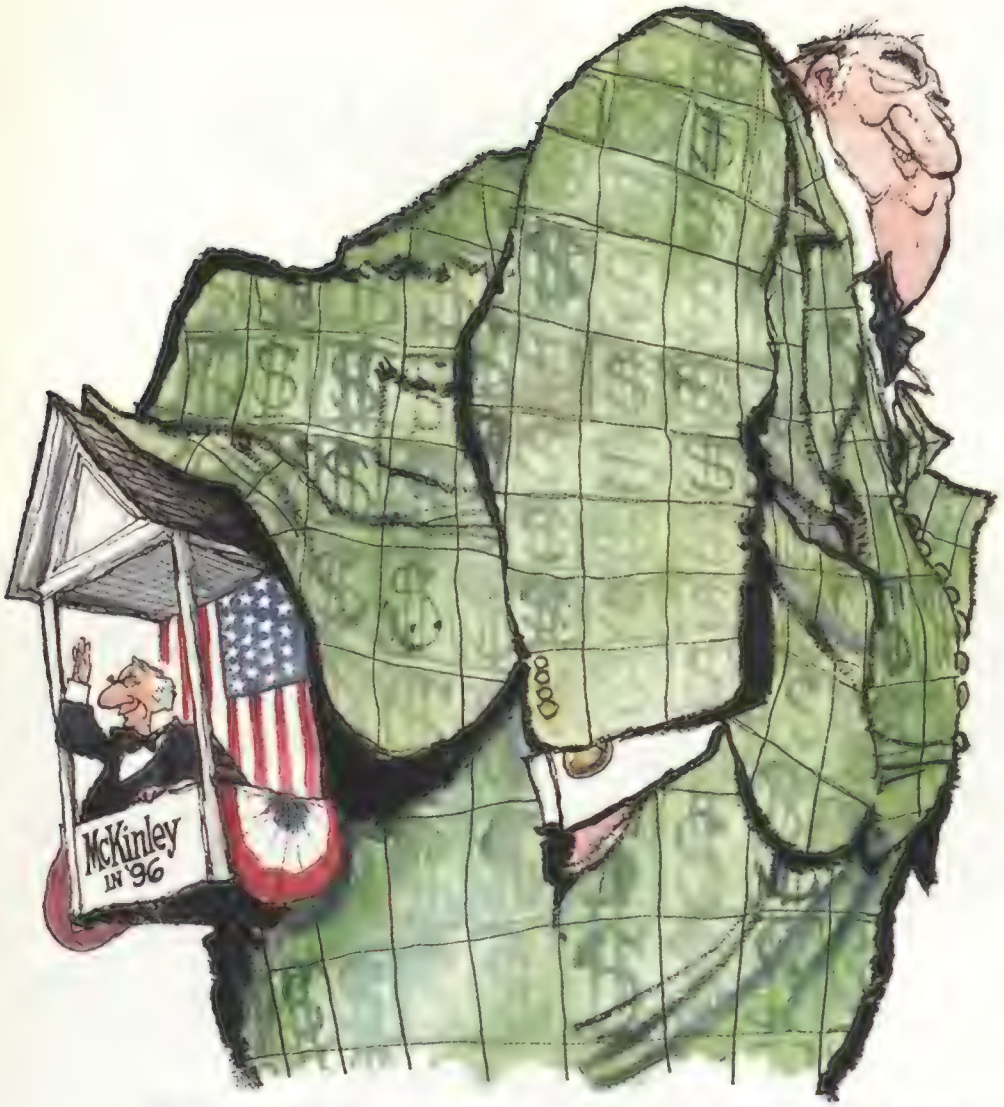

William McKinley "stumped" from his porch—and, some said, from the hip pocket of boss Mark Hanna.

His campaign slogan, "A Public Office is a Public Trust," stood in marked contrast to Blaine, a charming, sophisticated and sometimes funny man who campaigned as the "Plumed Knight," but who was also justly known as "Slippery Jim," a dishonest politician.

Blaine was a veteran legislator and skilled campaigner, of course, and his partisans soon were successfully poking fun at plodding Cleveland's inexperience and mushroomlike arrival on the political scene. Then on July 21, the gods seemed to deliver the Presidency to Blaine on a silver platter. There, under a banner headline on the front page of the Buffalo *Telegraph* was the shocking revelation that Governor Cleveland had an illegitimate, 10-year-old son by Maria Halpin, a widow who had sewed collars for a living. Some of Cleveland's advisers rushed to Albany, expecting denial. But Cleveland had always told his associates, "Whatever you say, tell the truth," and that was exactly what he did now. Many years before, he admitted, he'd cavorted with Halpin, and had since supported the child, though he was never sure it was really his. When advisers wrung their hands at the political implications of the affair, he is said to have added, "I don't believe the American people want a gelding in the White House."

Republicans exulted and paraded around in knightly armor sporting brightly colored plumes, gleefully singing "Ma! Ma! Where's my Pa? Gone to the White House—Hah! Hah! Hah!" The president of Amherst College told his students that only voters with corrupt morals could support Cleveland, who was charitably characterized as a "coarse debauchee who would bring harlots to Washington."

How the campaign might have turned out if Cleveland's amorous proclivities had remained the major issue, no one knows. Just in time, letters turned up new evidence that Blaine had been engaged in some shady bond deals, one with the unheeded postscript: "Burn this letter." Blaine denied wrongdoing, while cartoonists like Thomas Nast pilloried him as a creature drenched in loot, wearing three very bedraggled plumes. It was the turn of Democrats to chant: "Blaine! Blaine! Jay Gould Blaine! The Continental Liar from the state of Maine!"

Cleveland won by a whisker—23,000 votes out of a total of 9.7 million cast for both candidates—and chortling Democrats sang: "Hurray for Maria! Hurray for the Kid! / I voted for Cleveland, and I'm damned glad I did!"

The election of 1896 was an amazing show, too. It was not scandalous, but rather a study in contrasting character and political style which illustrated the hold that Presidential campaigning had upon the American public. It also marked the permanent arrival in American politics of the prominent as well as powerful campaign manager in the person of Cleveland businessman Mark Hanna, who had helped his unprepossessing protégé, Republican William McKinley, become Governor of Ohio.

McKinley was a high-tariff man and wanted to campaign, as much as he wanted to campaign at all, on that issue. But his Democratic opponent, a 36-year-old Nebraska Congressman named William Jennings Bryan, wouldn't let him. As a Western agrarian and Populist with a golden voice, Bryan had a bimetallist bee in his bonnet. These were depression years and bimetallists, especially Bryan, believed with a crusading fervor that the poor would have more money and the economy would look up if the country went off the gold standard.

Speeches at the rate of 30 a day

McKinley believed that bimetallism, which called for unlimited coinage of silver, was nonsense and initially he refused to campaign about it. Quite a few conservative Democrats agreed and quit the party. To take his problem to the people, Bryan ran a whistle-stop campaign so successful that it forced succeeding Presidential candidates to follow suit. He traveled 18,000 miles, gave more than 600 speeches, sometimes at a rate of 30 a day, brought his message to five million people and

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laid a rhetorical mark on the American language with the ringing phrase: "You shall not press down upon the brow of labor this crown of thorns. You shall not crucify mankind upon a cross of gold."

McKinley was unimpressed, but Hanna grew nervous and urged his candidate to go on the road. McKinley refused to budge from his porch. "I might as well put up a trapeze on my front lawn and compete with some professional athlete," he said, "as go out speaking against Bryan." In the end, however, he agreed to have delegations come to him in Canton and said he would speak out for gold.

With a little help from Hanna, gold standard supporters began to appear. They wore gold neckties and gold hatbands and some rode gold-trimmed bicycles. They brought McKinley gifts: cheese, butter, watermelons and even live American eagles. Each delegation chairman would read a statement. McKinley would smile and listen, "like a child looking at Santa Claus." Then, his mother at his side, he stood on a chair in a long double-breasted coat with a carnation in his buttonhole and offered some pithy remark. One such message, succinct and economically sound: "Free silver will degrade your money."

By November 3 he and Hanna had outdone Bryan. Where the neat lawn had been, there was plain brown earth, looking "as if a herd of buffalo had passed that way." The white picket fence and grape arbor had long since been demolished by souvenir hunters. And the front porch threatened to collapse. But some 750,000 visitors had trooped past McKinley's home.

Democrats decried the special excursion rates the railroads had been induced to charge for a trip to Canton. Hanna was cartooned as pig-eyed and bloated, wearing a suit checkered with dollar signs. But the election turned out two million more voters than in 1892 and Bryan was decisively defeated.

"My relatives told me about the fun of packing up a wagon to hear William Jennings Bryan speak," the 60-ish national columnist and political commentator Hugh Sidey once told me. "It was like a neighborhood barn raising. Even when Franklin Roosevelt came through on the train in 1934, a lot of our neighbors went down in their Model A Fords, hoisted their kids up to see and brought a picnic lunch, instead of going to the movies."

In fiery 1948 campaign, Harry Truman won by blasting the GOP, 80th Congress and Dewey as no-accounts.

Truman versus Republican "bloodsuckers"

The excitement of such campaigns is now mainly a fading memory, and like Sidey's, most of the recollections are secondhand. Yet FDR was not the last President to go to the people in this way. That honor belongs to Harry Truman and the legendary "Give 'em hell, Harry" whistle-stop campaign of 1948, when Truman, refusing to believe newspapers, experts and straws in the wind, took off around the country, his rimless spectacles glittering, and let Tom Dewey and the "no-account, do-nothing, Republican, Eightieth Congress" have it.

Sometimes making 14 short speeches a day from the back platform of the train, he called the Republicans "bloodsuckers." Noting that they had "already stuck a pitchfork in the farmer's back," he told the folks in

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Missouri and Kansas and Iowa, "I wonder how many times you have to be hit on the head before you find out who's hitting you." All the rich Republicans would do, he said, was "let a little trickle down off the table like the crumbs that fell to Lazarus."

The press and the pundits wrote Truman off entirely. Though Alice Roosevelt Longworth said Dewey looked like the "bridegroom on a wedding cake," *Life* referred to him simply as "The next President," while the *Kiplinger Magazine* devoted an issue to what Dewey would do when, not if, he was elected. On the campaign train, one day, campaign adviser Clark Clifford tried to hide a copy of *Newsweek*, which had just polled 50 leading political commentators, reporting that not a single "expert" had picked Truman. But the President got hold of the copy anyway. He was not dismayed. "He looked at me," Clifford recalls, "and said, 'You know, not one of those 50 fellows has enough sense to pound sand in a rat hole!'"

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After presiding over dismemberment of Czechoslovakia, the Munich negotiators pose for history. From left:

By Otto Friedrich

Appeasement at Munich—and the way to war

Fifty years ago France and Britain sought peace by selling out to Adolf Hitler, with grim consequences that haunt us still

Neville Chamberlain, Edouard Daladier, Adolf Hitler, Benito Mussolini—with his son-in-law Count Ciano.

"This may be the last day of peace," Virginia Woolf wrote in her diary, "so why not record it, as I've 20 minutes & nothing to do?"

It was Wednesday, September 28, 1938, and her husband had driven her to London in the rain. She was impressed by the sight of workmen digging trenches as crude air-raid shelters in Turnham Green. Adolf Hitler's bombers were expected from hour to hour. Orders had already been issued for the evacuation of London's schoolchildren and the clearing of hospitals. "It's a miserable day and our thoughts are miserable," a woman in a coffeeshop on New Oxford Street told Woolf, but she predicted that it would be a short war and Britain would win.

This was a year before World War II really began, of course, a year before the Hitler-Stalin pact, a year before the invasion of Poland. At the time, however, the Czechoslovakian crisis of 1938 seemed every bit as terrifying. Across the Channel in Paris on that day, an estimated one-third of the population crowded highways and railroads in an attempt to flee the capital before the German bombers came. Nobody could forget what they had done to the undefended Spanish town of Guernica.

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Fear of German bombers helped transform European peacemakers into appeasers. By 1938 Hitler was building 800 planes a month.

Like most of the people of England, Woolf had heard Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain on the night of September 27 addressing the nation by radio from No. 10 Downing Street. "How horrible, fantastic, incredible it is," said the man who became history's most famous appeaser, "that we should be digging trenches . . . here because of a quarrel in a far-away country between people of whom we know nothing." Hitler was demanding that the Czechs surrender the Sudetenland by Saturday, October 1, or he would seize it by force. Wanting to escape, on "the last day of peace," Woolf wandered over to Trafalgar Square, to the National Gallery, to hear a lecture on Watteau and to look at the Renoirs. "Warned by a sober loudspeaker to get my gas mask as I walked down Pall Mall."

Harold Nicolson, the Member of Parliament, also noted the gas-mask warnings on his way to the House of Commons to hear Chamberlain's speech. "The pigeons are clustering around the fountains and there is a group of children feeding them," he later wrote in his journal. "My companion says to me, 'Those children ought to be evacuated at once, and so should the pigeons.'"

On Westminster Bridge, by Big Ben and the Houses of Parliament, a handful of newly installed antiaircraft guns stood guard. Inside, the crowd fell hushed as Chamberlain "rose slowly in his place and spread the manuscript of his speech upon the box in front of him. . . ."

While the British and French paled at the prospect of a new war, so did the threatening Germans. Only recently self-liberated from the crippling restrictions of the Versailles Treaty, the German Army had to strip its defenses along the French frontier in order to mobilize 37 divisions for an invasion of Czechoslovakia. But the Czechs had 30 divisions to protect their heavily fortified border, and the French forces along the Rhine were even larger and supposed to be stronger. When one of Hitler's generals warned him that the outnumbered German forces could not hold their ground in the west for more than three weeks, the Führer exploded in rage. "I say to you, Herr

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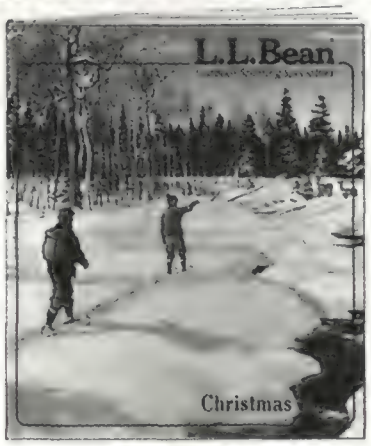

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General," he shouted, "the position will be held not only for three weeks but for three years!"

The chief of the German General Staff, Ludwig Beck, tried to organize the officer corps against Hitler to stop the drift toward war, and then resigned. Hitler simply appointed Franz Halder to replace him. Even then, according to Halder's postwar testimony, the German Army had a plan for deposing the Führer the moment he gave the order for war (provided, always, that Britain and France proved willing to fight). The plotters met in Halder's office at about noon on September 28. They intended, Halder asserted, "to occupy the Reich Chancellery and those government offices . . . administered by . . . close supporters of Hitler."

Parliament was crowded with people eager to hear whether Chamberlain would declare war on September 28. After the opening prayers, he spoke for more than an hour, retracing his recent negotiations with Hitler. Suddenly, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sir John Simon, began signaling, trying to interrupt Chamberlain's speech, then handed him a sheet of paper.

"His whole face, his whole body, seemed to change," Nicolson noted. "He raised his face so that the light from the ceiling fell full upon it. All the lines of anxiety and weariness seemed suddenly to have been smoothed out; he appeared ten years younger and triumphant." Chamberlain's announcement electrified Parliament: "Herr Hitler invites me to meet him at Munich tomorrow morning. He has also invited Signor Mussolini and Monsieur Daladier. I need not say what my answer will be."

"Thank God for the Prime Minister!" cried one M.P., and then the whole House exploded into shouts and cheers and showers of torn paper.

The city of Munich is a pleasant but rather undistinguished sort of place for history to be made. Originally it was a 12th-century monastery and then the site of a mint on the banks of the Isar, but many of its historic buildings are fakes, copies or reconstructions. During Munich's annual Oktoberfest, its sausage-stuffed citizens carouse on powerful new beer. Adolf Hitler, the outcast of Austria, felt warmly sentimental about this raucous Bavarian capital, perhaps because it had been the site of his famous "beer hall putsch" of 1923.

During war scare in 1938, Londoners swiftly dug impromptu trenches, exactly as they did, here, after the war had really started in 1939.

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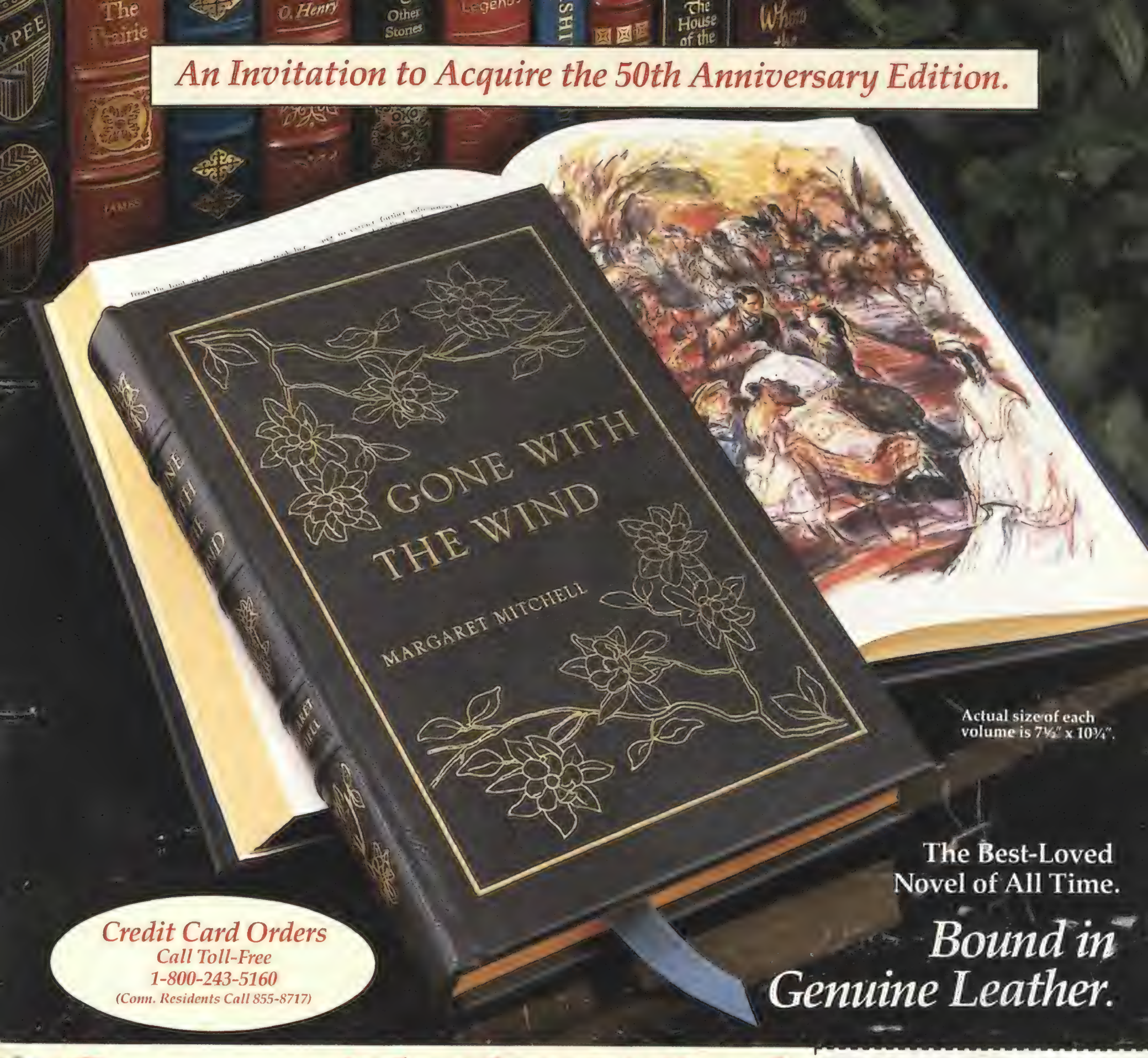

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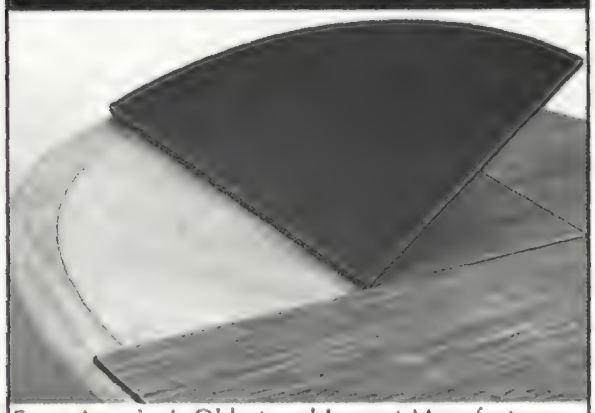

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Map shows perilous Czech position after Hitler had annexed Austria.

Hauptstadt der Bewegung (Capital of the Movement) was Hitler's grandiose title for Munich. He established Nazi Party headquarters there and promptly began redesigning the city. One of the early stretches of Germany's autobahn system was begun there (reaching out toward Salzburg) and so was the first concentration camp (at nearby Dachau). In 1935, Hitler built himself a personal command post called the Führerhaus, a three-story palace of yellow Danubian limestone, with a 65-foot-high hall and three balconies for the reviewing of parades. And here, exactly 50 years ago, Hitler invited the prime ministers of Britain and France, and the Italian Duce to join him in what the history of power politics knows simply as "Munich."

History also knows that meeting in Munich as the culmination of the policy called "appeasement." And it knows appeasement, symbolized by the faintly ludicrous umbrella carried by Chamberlain on his return from Munich, as synonymous with shame and failure, with the concept of peace at any price and thus, inevitably, war. When Anthony Eden, who had made his reputation as a high-minded opponent of Munich, eventually became Britain's prime minister and had to confront the seemingly insatiable demands of Egypt's Gamal Abdel Nasser, it was the specter of Munich that inspired him to launch the doomed 1956 invasion of the Suez

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Canal Zone. And in all the twists of the Cold War, up to and most notably including Vietnam, echoes of Munich have haunted American policy, conferring a distant curse on concessions to hostile powers, and on compromise as well. Appeasement—that way lies surrender, the echoes seem to warn, surrender and defeat.

But all this happened a scant 20 years after World War I. To the rulers of Britain and France in that summer of 1938, all of whom could remember the awful carnage of the Somme and Verdun, appeasement was a civilized policy proudly proclaimed. "Appeasement between the wars was always a self-confident creed," Churchill biographer Martin Gilbert was to write in *The Roots of Appeasement.* "It was both utopian and practical. Its aim was peace for all time, or at least for as long as wise men could devise it. . . .

Czech statesmen Tomas Masaryk and Edvard Beneš resisted the Nazis.

Appeasement was a search for international relations conducted without resort to armed conflict."

As often happens with momentous events, "Munich" did not actually take place in Munich. The famous conference was only a ratification of decisions already reached. Everyone had already agreed that Hitler would get whatever he wanted, that Britain and France would give in, that Czechoslovakia would be dismembered without a shot being fired. As soon as the German generals heard that Chamberlain was flying to Munich, they canceled whatever measures they claimed had been planned to thwart a war-hungry Hitler. "One could only wait in case a new chance should come," said Halder.

The roots of the surrender at Munich lay in the very origins of Czechoslovakia itself. The Czechs, an

The former died before Munich; the latter fled to London afterward.

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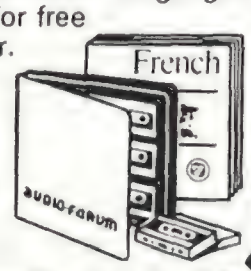

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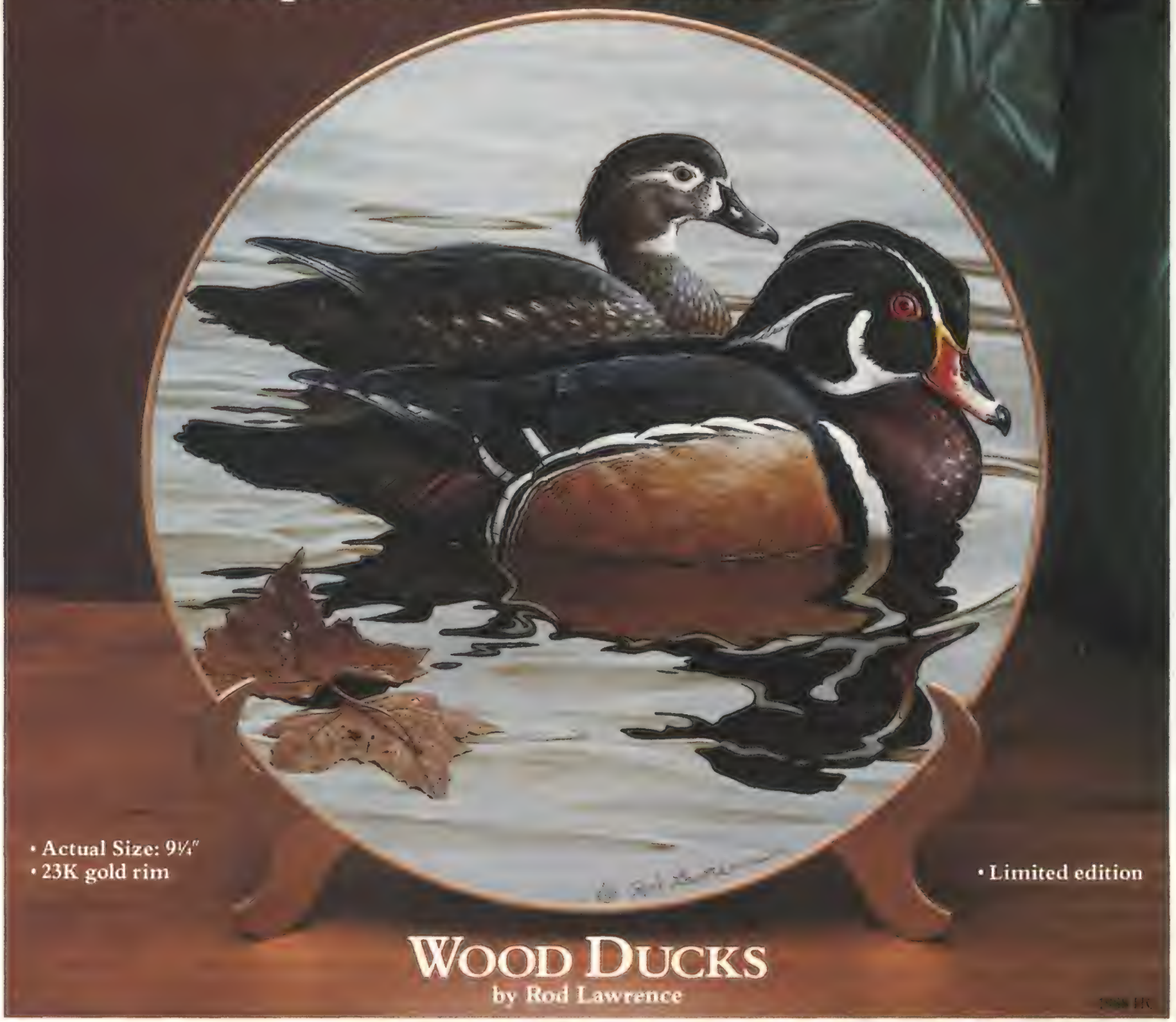
energetic people who had lost their independence to Hapsburg Austria in the 16th century, saw an opportunity to regain it as the Hapsburgs lurched to their destruction in the German defeat of 1918. When the victors gathered to draw up the peace of Versailles, the Czechs, under the leadership of Tomas Masaryk and Edvard Beneš, took their place among those emergent peoples ready to invoke President Wilson's widely trumpeted principle of self-determination.

The nation of Czechoslovakia that came into existence in 1918 looked like a gerrymander (even its original name, Czecho-Slovakia, was a hyphenated invention) and predictably had a polyglot population: roughly seven million Czechs, three million Sudeten (i.e., frontier) Germans, two million Slovaks along with a million Hungarians and a sprinkling of Poles. President Masaryk and his successor Beneš did their best to weld these disputatious rivals into a united democracy, but the minorities all claimed

A Masterpiece of Nature…An Artistic Triumph



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by Rod Lawrence

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"Wood Ducks" gains further significance as the premiere issue in an important collection entitled *American Waterbirds.* Each issue will feature a Lawrence masterwork, enhanced with a generous 23K gold rim, depicting one of North America's best-known species of waterbirds. Each plate will be hand-numbered on its reverse, accompanied by a same-numbered Certificate of Authenticity, and limited to a total of 14 firing days.

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various ethnic rights and constantly complained of repression.

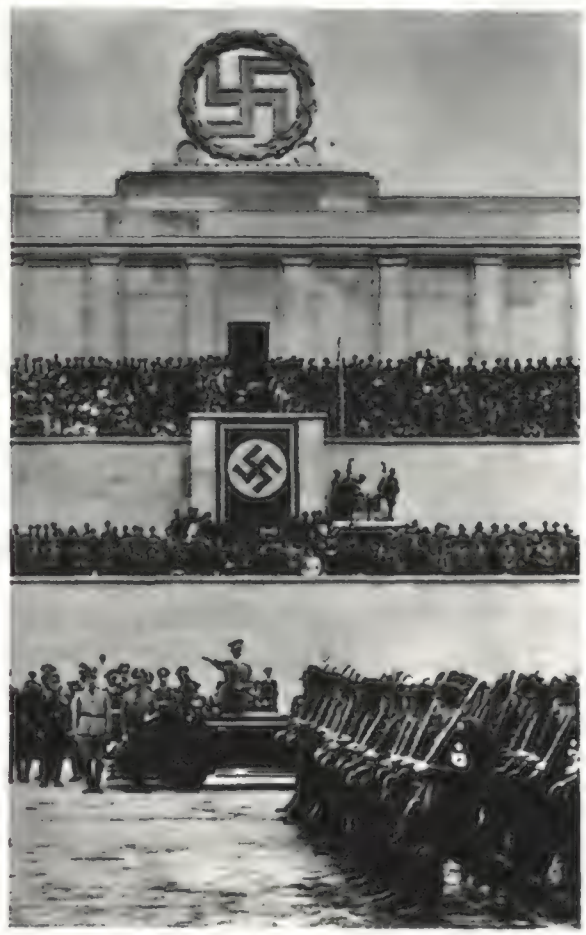
This remained a minor, local difficulty until 1933 when Hitler began claiming the loyalty of all ethnic Germans for his Third Reich. If Hitlerism alone was not enough to win support for Konrad Henlein's Sudeten German Party, Germany reinforced the cause by paying Henlein a secret subsidy of 15,000 marks per month. Hitler also gave Henlein instructions, reduced to a simple formula: "We must always demand so much from the Czechs that we can never be satisfied."

In hindsight, it is clear that Hitler's threats and demands were all part of a systematic campaign to enlarge the German state, but nobody knew in 1938 exactly how far he planned to go. There was a certain shock when he marched into Austria in the spring of 1938, though nobody was prepared to resist the reunion of these two Germanic lands. In general, Austrians gave the impression of welcoming the *Anschluss*. Besides, many enlightened

Before Munich, Hitler chose the pliant Gen. Franz Halder to run the army.

Britons felt the Versailles Treaty had been too vindictive, that the German case for revision was a strong one. Some criticized Hitler for imprisoning his opponents, but a good many others were impressed by his magnetism and leadership. Some even believed Britain should never have entered World War I on the side of her traditional enemy, France. The long-standing British idea of restoring a traditional balance of power in Europe had already led to the Anglo-German Naval Agreement of 1935. Lord Rothermere's *Daily Mail* openly advocated the return of Germany's African colonies.

Czechoslovakia was somewhat different from Austria. Except for the Germanic population at its western end, it was a Slavic country. The Beneš government had no desire whatever to be taken over by Germany. Czechoslovakia also had a strong army to defend itself, and France was pledged by treaty to defend the Czechs against any aggression (Stalin's Soviet Union had promised to help defend the Czechs, but only on condition that the French did, too). And, of course, the



At a rally in Nuremberg, Hitler called for annihilation of Czechoslovakia.

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Germans kept professing that they had no designs on Czechoslovakia. "I give you my word of honor," Marshal Hermann Göring told the Czech foreign minister, "that Czechoslovakia has nothing to fear from the Reich."

Meanwhile, the Sudetens' Henlein, under Nazi orders to keep making demands that could not be satisfied, proved worthy of his orders. After Henlein had repeatedly fomented outbreaks of street fighting, he drew up a list of terms for a settlement: not only political autonomy, separate citizenship for Sudeten Germans and payment for past damages, but also full freedom for the Sudetens to practice "the ideology of Germans" (i.e., Nazism). The Czechs rejected the terms outright.

Then in mid-May of 1938 came a wave of rumors—possibly started by the Germans—that four German motorized divisions had taken up positions on the Czech border. Czechoslovakia ordered a partial mobilization; the French told the Germans they were ready to fight; the British expressed "grave concern." Thus challenged, Wilhelm Keitel, Chief of the High Command, officially declared the rumors of troop concentrations "absolute nonsense."

The so-called May Crisis was the first great round of bluffs in the Czech tragedy, and by standing together and accepting the risk of war, the Allies won decisively. Hitler, while denying everything, backed down. Yet this victory had two odd and important consequences. One was that the British and French looked back at the danger of war they had just passed through, shuddered and decided that such risks should henceforth be avoided. Hitler, by contrast, felt humiliated, furious and eager for revenge. In other words, the victors decided that they could not afford to win again, and the loser vowed that he would not again lose. To the Wehrmacht commanders to whom he had assigned both the planning and execution of Operation Green, the code name for the invasion of Czechoslovakia scheduled for October 1, 1938, Hitler declared: "It is my unalterable decision to smash [*zerschlagen*] Czechoslovakia

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Actual Size of Susan B. Anthony $1 Coin

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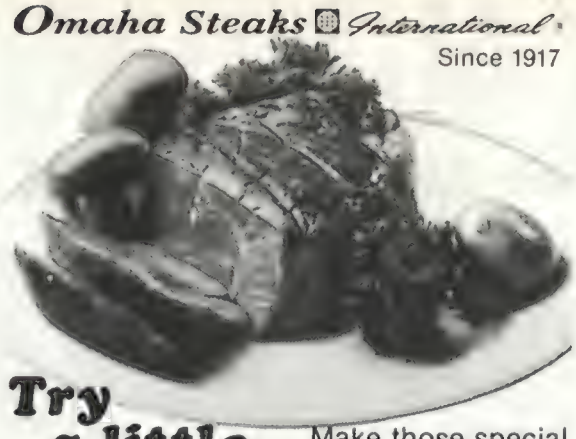

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Chamberlain always believed that he could trust moody Führer's word.

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To avoid any repetition of the May Crisis, Chamberlain decided, with the approval of the French, to send Lord Runciman, a wealthy businessman, to Prague as a mediator. Runciman was supposed to be neutral, but his real mission was to pressure President Beneš into some kind of agreement with the intransigent Sudeten leaders. Since their instructions were to "never be satisfied," that soon proved impossible. Beneš finally summoned the Sudetens to his Hradschin Palace on September 4 and handed them a sheet of blank paper. "Please write your party's full demands for the German minority," he said. "I promise you in advance to grant them immediately."

The startled Sudetens ("My God, they have given us everything!" one of them said later) only squirmed and avoided answering. "Go on, I mean it," Beneš said. "Write!"

Since the Sudetens still evaded him, Beneš took back the paper, unscrewed his fountain pen and said, "Very well,

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if you won't write it down, I will. You tell me what to say." When the Sudeten leaders restated their previous demands for autonomy and separate citizenship, Beneš handed this to Lord Runciman and announced that he was doing so only because of Anglo-French pressure. But Hitler was not about to accept a solution. The Sudetens returned to street fighting, and the Führer went before one of his mammoth Nuremberg rallies to excoriate the supposedly unyielding Czechs. "If these tormented creatures cannot obtain justice and help," he shouted on behalf of the Sudetens, "they will receive both from us!"

It was at this point that Neville Chamberlain decided to propose a personal interview with Hitler. The Führer's reaction: "*Ich bin vom Himmel gefallen,*" he joked ("I am astounded"). But he declined to come to Berlin for such a meeting, instead inviting the Prime Minister to his Alpine retreat in Berchtesgaden. There they could meet quietly for tea.

We now know considerably more than Hitler's contemporaries did about the psychic maelstrom that drove the German leader—the sudden rages, the fears, the paranoia, the megalomania. But Neville Chamberlain, too, brought to the conflict an odd personality of his own, a nature almost exactly complementary to that of his antagonist. He was nearly 70, some 20 years Hitler's senior, and while the Führer was the creation of a slightly disreputable provincial lower class, Chamberlain came from a line of intensely proper Unitarians in industrial Birmingham. His father had become rich as a manufacturer of screws before entering politics, and served in several Cabinets. Hitler's life had always been chaotic, inspired by absurd dreams of grandeur; Chamberlain's orderly career led him to become a successful businessman, housing expert, Health Minister, and Chancellor of the Exchequer. He was an able administrator but a narrow and conventional man. He believed—misguidedly, as it would turn out—in reason and trust.

Chamberlain had no experience in dealing with a man like Hitler; he could not imagine such a violent, capricious will, such guile and deceit. "It can fairly be said of Neville Chamberlain," according to William Strang

During lunch at their second meeting on September 15, in Berchtesgaden retreat, Chamberlain nervously rubs his wrist, Hitler looks glum.

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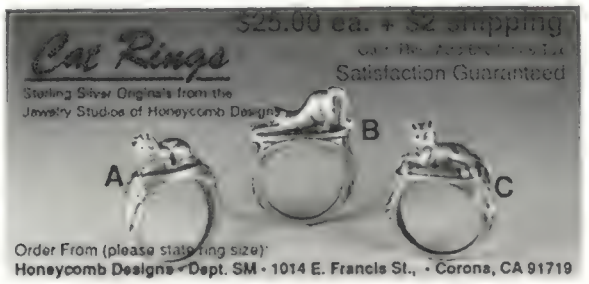
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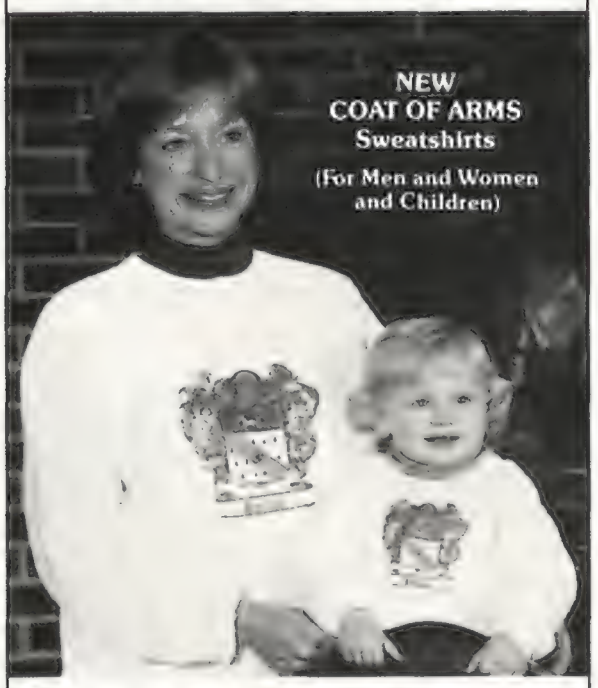

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of the Foreign Office, who accompanied the Prime Minister to Munich, "that he was not well versed in foreign affairs, that he had no touch for a diplomatic situation, that he did not fully realize what it was he was doing and that his native confidence in his own judgment and powers of persuasion and achievement was misplaced."

Hitler had campaigned by plane all over Germany in 1932 and 1933, but Chamberlain's flight to Munich on September 15, his first ever, made him slightly airsick. At Berchtesgaden "Hitler began fairly quietly," according to Paul Schmidt, the Foreign Ministry interpreter who was the only outsider to take part in this meeting, "by presenting in full the list of complaints against Germany's neighbors." He said he would "not tolerate any longer that a small, second-rate country should treat the mighty thousand-year-old German Reich as something inferior." Chamberlain soothingly suggested that everything could be settled as long as Hitler would abjure the use of force.

"Force!" Hitler cried. "Who speaks of force? Herr Beneš applies force against my countrymen in the Sudetenland, Herr Beneš, not I, mobilized in May. I shall settle this question in one way or another. I shall take matters into my own hands."

At this outburst, the stately Chamberlain also became agitated. "If I have understood you aright," he said, "you are determined to proceed against Czechoslovakia in any case. If that is so, why did you let me come to Berchtesgaden?"

Finding himself at a brink that was of his own creation, Hitler edged back. But as often happened in negotiations, he took the opportunity to seize a new position. "If . . . you are prepared to recognize the principle of the right of peoples to self-determination," he said, "then we can continue the discussion in order to see

The author has written nine books, including Before the Deluge, *about the ill-fated Weimar Republic.*

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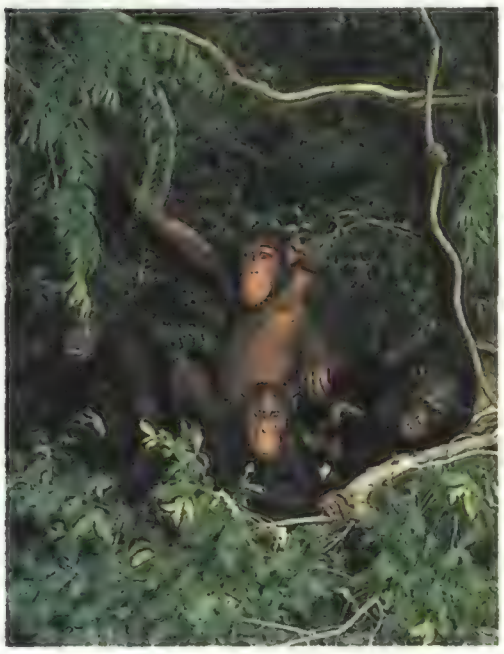

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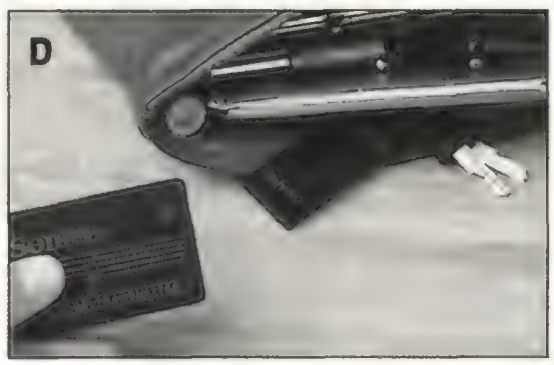
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how that principle can be applied."

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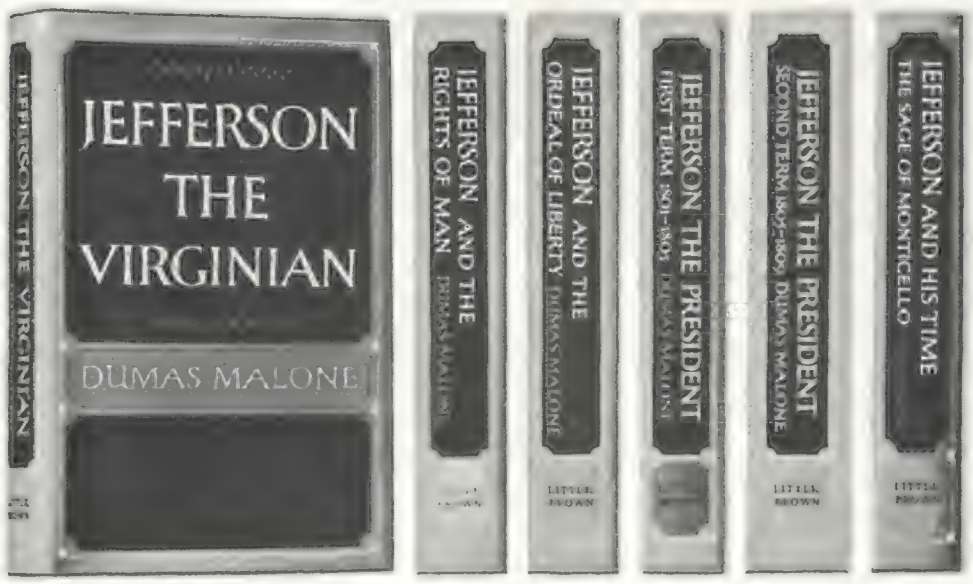

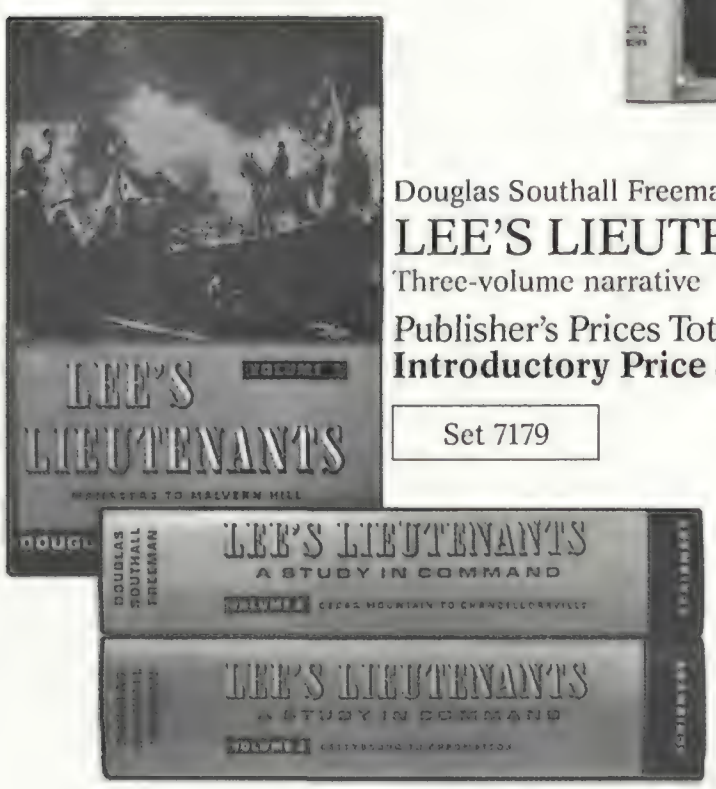

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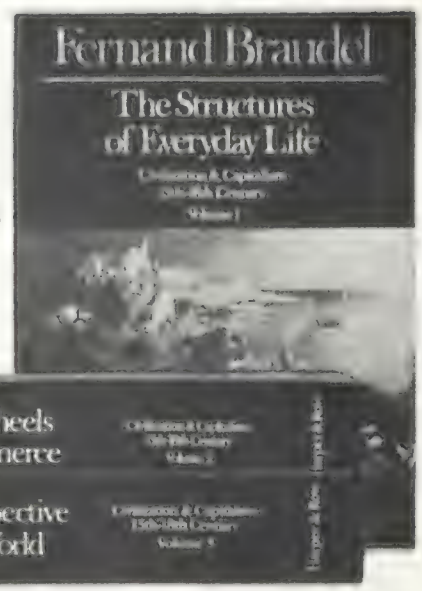

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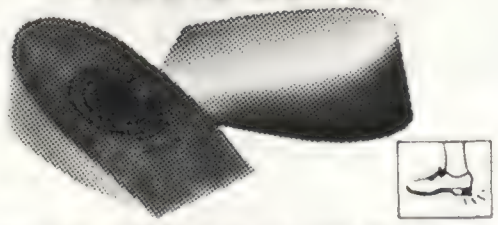

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Chamberlain had only a week to convince his Cabinet, his allies and his victims that Czechoslovakia should surrender the Sudetenland to Germany.

British support was not difficult to win; few in London felt much enthusiasm for a battle over the Sudetenland. France was a little more difficult, for Germany was her traditional, next-door enemy. France had also signed a treaty promising to fight for Czechoslovakia—though only if hostilities actually broke out. The still-war-weary French wanted a surrender, but they wanted the Czechs to do the surrendering. So it was that on September 18, Prime Minister Daladier journeyed to London and agreed with Chamberlain that Prague should accept the "direct transfer to the Reich of all territories with over 50 percent Sudeten inhabitants."

How could Beneš accept that? Not only was he being asked to surrender a territory inhabited by 800,000 Czechs as well as 2.8 million Sudeten Germans, but that territory included the fortified mountain frontier; without it, Czechoslovakia would be, as Hitler intended, completely defenseless. Furthermore, the Sudetenland was Czechoslovakia's industrial center, producing 65 percent of its coal, 70 percent of its iron and steel, 80 percent of its textiles, 86 percent of its chemicals. On the other hand, the prospect of war was daunting. The French representative was called in and asked a fundamental question: If Czechoslovakia decided to fight, would the French honor their treaty to join the fight? He burst into tears. When the official answer finally came from Paris the following day, it was appalling: "*La France ne s'y associera pas.*" ("France will have nothing to do with it.")

A German military band played "God Save the King" when Chamberlain arrived in Cologne at noon on September 22, before taking the ferry across the muddy Rhine to the Hotel Dreesen in the resort of Godesberg. Chamberlain opened this second meeting with Hitler by reporting with some satisfaction that he had won approval on all of Hitler's demands. Hitler was again surprised at his own success.

"Do I understand," he asked, "that

During Munich meeting, Edouard Daladier, France's unnerved Prime Minister, gloomily takes a backseat with bullying Air Force chief, Hermann Göring.

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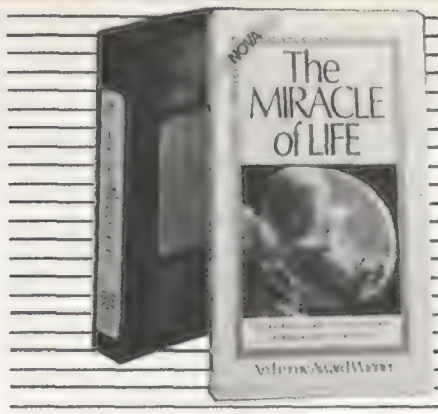

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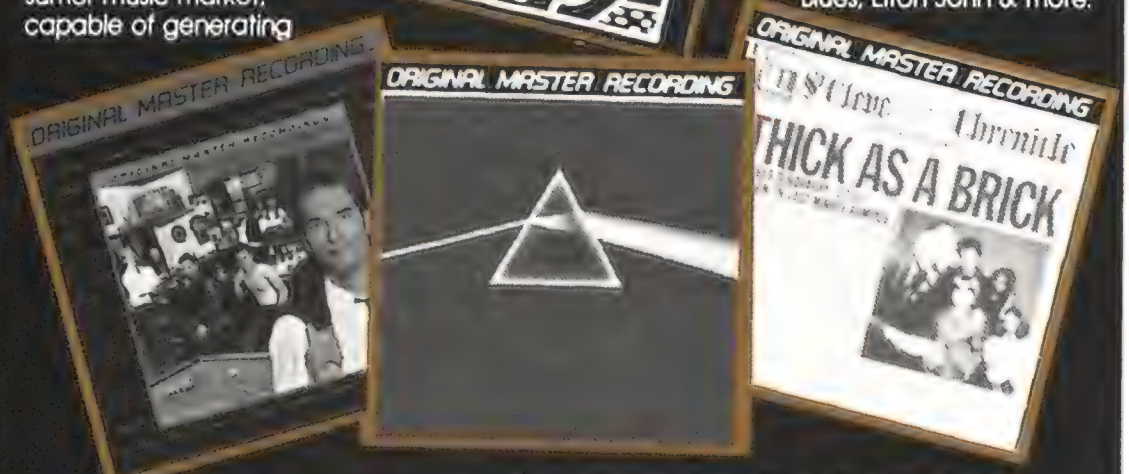

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the British, French and Czech governments have agreed to the transfer of the Sudetenland from Czechoslovakia to Germany?"

"Yes," said Chamberlain.

"I am terribly sorry," said Hitler, "but that doesn't suit me anymore."

"Chamberlain sat up with a start," interpreter Schmidt recalled later. "He flushed with anger at Hitler's attitude, at the ingratitude for his pains. I noticed that his kindly eyes could gleam very angrily under their bushy brows. Chamberlain was extremely surprised and indignant."

Now that Hitler had been given what he wanted, he no longer wanted it to be seen as a gift. He wanted no more talk of plebiscites or negotiated transfers of authority. He had secretly ordered his armies to attack on October 1, and that was still his deadline, and it was only a week away. "The occupation of the Sudeten territories to be ceded must take place forthwith," Hitler declared. He began waving reports of new violence in the Sudetenland. "Two more Germans killed by the Czechs," he shouted. "I will be avenged for every one of them. The Czechs must be annihilated."

Chamberlain professed himself to be "profoundly shocked" by Hitler's new maneuver, and after several hours of turbulent exchanges, he retired to his rooms. The next morning, as a last gesture, he wrote a conciliatory note to Hitler, offering to serve as "mediator" if Hitler would specify exactly what he wanted. Hitler wrote back his new terms: Czech surrender of the Sudetenland—to begin in two days.

"But this is nothing less than an ultimatum," Chamberlain protested at their next meeting, late on September 23.

"Nothing of the sort," Hitler retorted. "It is not a *Diktat* at all: look, the document is headed by the word 'Memorandum.'"

But then, deceptive as ever, he cleverly pretended to make a concession, telling Chamberlain that he could have until October 1.

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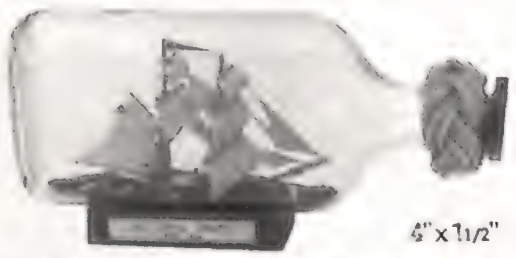

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Preserving the amenities at Munich, Chamberlain chats up Mussolini.

Once again, Chamberlain could only promise to consult with his associates. This time, he encountered more difficulties. Within the British Cabinet, the First Lord of the Admiralty, Duff Cooper, threatened to resign (and subsequently did). Even Chamberlain's loyal Foreign Secretary, Lord Halifax, said that the ultimatum should be rejected. And so Chamberlain finally rejected it. And so did Daladier.

"If Germany then invades Czechoslovakia, what will you do?" Chamberlain asked Daladier.

"In that case, France will come to the assistance of the Czechs," said Daladier.

Chamberlain sent Sir Horace Wilson to inform Hitler. Until that moment, the morning of September 27, Chamberlain had never formally stated what Britain would do if war broke out. Now he did. "If France, in fulfillment of her treaty obligations, should become actively involved in hostilities against Germany," Wilson read carefully from his instructions, "the United Kingdom would deem itself obliged to support France."

Hitler was once again furious. Wilson's message simply meant that both Britain and France felt free to attack, he shouted. "If France and England want to unleash war, they can do so. It's a matter of complete indifference

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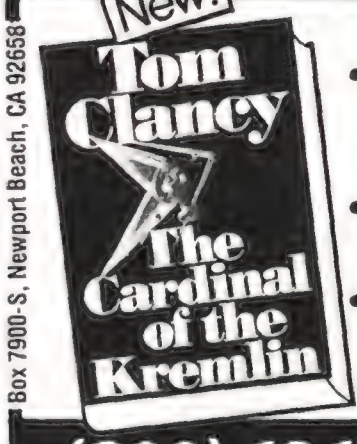

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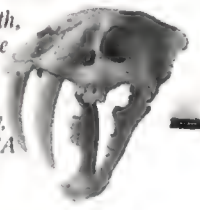

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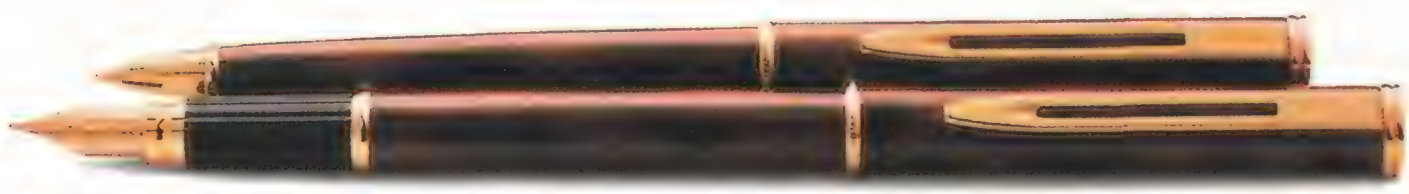

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to me. I am prepared. . . . So—next week we'll all find ourselves at war with each other."

That was how Virginia Woolf and Harold Nicolson came to encounter posters warning everyone to get fitted for gas masks. That was how Chamberlain felt called upon to tell Britons the dark prospects before them. But once again, all the main players in the game knew that there were ways to draw back from the brink. Several people had proposed an international conference to take up the crisis. President Roosevelt had suggested it that very week. Chamberlain had long favored it, but the Foreign Office had cooled his interest by warning that the invitations would have to include the troublesome Soviets.

Now, in a late diplomatic flurry, Chamberlain suggested to Mussolini that perhaps Italy might serve as some kind of mediator. Mussolini saw a chance to play a part. He sent his Berlin Ambassador, Bernardo Attolico, running over to the Reichs Chancellery. "The slightly stooping Attolico was breathless, his face flushed with excitement," Schmidt recalled. "'I have an urgent message to you from the Duce, Führer,' he shouted. . . . 'The British government . . . will accept the Duce's mediation in the Sudeten question. . . . Whatever you decide, Führer, Fascist Italy stands behind you.'"

Hitler required only the briefest pause before he grandly answered the breathless Italian: "Tell the Duce that I accept his proposal."

Since Hitler was playing host in Munich, on the eve of Oktoberfest, he could invite whom he pleased. He invited Chamberlain, Daladier and Mussolini—but neither Soviets nor Czechs. "I beg that nothing may be done at Munich without Czechoslovakia being heard," Beneš wrote to Chamberlain. "I shall have the interests of Czechoslovakia fully in mind," said Chamberlain.

The British Prime Minister was pleased at the new prospects in Munich. "When I was a little boy," he told reporters as he departed from the airport outside London, "I used to repeat, 'If at first you don't succeed, try, try, try again.' That is what I am doing. When I come back, I hope I may be able to say, as Hotspur says in *Henry IV*, 'Out of this nettle, danger, we pluck this flower, safety.'" Nobody seemed to recall that Hotspur was soon to die.

The four leaders gathered on September 29 to discuss what everyone politely called "the Duce's proposal," which consisted of turning over the Sudetenland to Hitler forthwith. There were only minor disagreements, and even on those, Hitler got his way. The French said it "would be an advantage" if a Czech representative could be present and "could be consulted." Hitler refused. The most he would allow was that two Czech diplomats sit in an adjoining room in case either the British or the French wanted to confer with them. A few other disagreements ended similarly. When Chamberlain complained that Czechs being expelled from the Sudetenland would not even be allowed to take their cattle with them, Hitler shouted his scorn: "Our time is too valuable to be wasted on such trivialities!"

How was it, then, that the weaker of the antagonists could get his way in everything? To some extent, it was be-

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Such passions somehow communicate themselves, and real determination makes the less determined give way. These judgments, when they involve war or peace, are not a matter of reasonable deliberation. It has been said that a truly reasonable army would run away. Chamberlain and Daladier were civilized men, and when they remembered the agony of 1914-18, and then imagined war, they imagined bombs falling on London and Paris, bombs and murderous clouds of poison gas. When Hitler imagined war, he remembered defeat on the Western Front and gloated at the opportunity for revenge. When Chamberlain and Daladier had to

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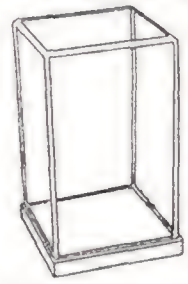

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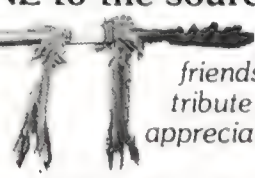

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judge Hitler, they had to reflect on the worst of possibilities, and they did. "How terrible it is," Hitler is said to have remarked to an aide as he observed the British and French leaders from a distance, "I always have to deal with nonentities."

And so, shortly after 2 in the morning on September 30, 1938, almost exactly according to Hitler's secret invasion schedule, the press photographers were called in and the four leaders prepared to sign their agreement. The official inkwell was found to be dry and had to be replenished. Only after the document was signed, and after the Germans and Italians had departed, were the two Czechs allowed in and handed the text of the accord. "Mr. Chamberlain was yawning continuously, without making any effort to conceal his yawns," one of the Czech diplomats, Hubert Masarik, later reported. He asked whether the Czechs were supposed (or allowed) to provide any response to the treaty partitioning their country, and one of the French said "with superficial casualness, but harshly enough, that no answer was required from us."

The next morning, Chamberlain persuaded Hitler to sign another document, which proclaimed "the desire of our two peoples never to go to war with one another again." With that, he returned to a hero's welcome in London. Well-wishers crowded around No. 10 Downing Street shouting, "Good old Neville!" and chanting, "For he's a jolly good fellow." Chamberlain appeared at the window and confirmed what his supporters wanted to hear. "I believe," he said, using words that would live in irony, "it is peace for our time."

There were, of course, a few voices of protest. In the parliamentary debate that ended in a resounding vote of confidence for Chamberlain, Winston Churchill denounced the agreement at Munich as total defeat, "a disaster of the first magnitude." The chief argument by Chamberlain's supporters, that war was too high a price

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for the Sudetenland, remained an uncertain proposition. "If you have sacrificed my nation to preserve the peace of the world, I will be the first to applaud you," Jan Masaryk, the son of the late Czech president, said to Chamberlain when he first heard of the Prime Minister's plan to fly to Munich. "But if not, gentlemen, God help your souls."

The peace of the world, such as it was, lasted only another 11 months. It is possible to believe that if Britain and France had stood firm, war might not have broken out at all. At the very least it might have been delayed until the democracies had had a chance to rearm. Poor Czechoslovakia did not even last six months; Hitler seized the rest of the country in March 1939. And Chamberlain, who had felt he could trust Hitler's word, once again offered no resistance. It was only when Hitler misread the lessons of Czechoslovakia and invaded Poland the following September that Chamberlain faced the fact that no alternative to war was left. In retrospect, nobody could even say that the Munich concessions gave Britain and France a whole year's reprieve in which to prepare themselves.

Wasted by cancer, Neville Chamberlain died in November 1940. By then his fellow citizens had already suffered and survived the bombings so dreaded at the time of Munich. The new Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, who all during the 1930s had fought for rearmament and against appeasement, spoke magnanimously of his misguided predecessor. "It fell to Neville Chamberlain in one of the supreme crises of the world to be contradicted by events, to be disappointed in his hopes, and to be deceived and cheated by a wicked man," said Churchill. "But what were those hopes in which he was disappointed? . . . They were surely among the most noble and benevolent instincts of the human heart—the love of peace, the toil for peace, the strife for peace, the pursuit of peace, even at great peril." He said this, remember, when the war that grew out of Munich still had nearly five long years to run.

Hitler crosses border into Czechoslovakia on October 3, 1938, two days after troops occupied Sudetenland. In less than six months he took the rest of the country, then invaded Poland, igniting World War II.

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Book reviews

The Name of the Cat
Barbara Holland
Dodd, Mead, $16.95

People who know cats know they are among the world's most attractive and intriguing beings. People who do not know cats have a great deal to learn—if they have sense enough to know where they are lacking. There are people, too, who do not like cats—they don't know anything about anything. This smart, bright, well-written, absorbing and informative book is for all of them in this way: it will delight the knowing, inform the unknowing and, possibly, introduce the anticat people to one of life's most satisfying relationships, even if they don't deserve the embellishment of their daily lives that they so sadly have been without.

People who know cats know about the general run of books about cats, and they know enough to avoid them, although it is not possible to pass up a book of pictures of cats, even the cute ones. For the most part, books about cats, which are innumerable, are very bad and boring and repetitive. A book about cats as good as this one is rare.

It is not a "how-to" book. It is a book of personal reflection on the subject, with any number of details of encounters and relationships with different cats. Various breeds of cats are commented on and there is some attention paid to care and feeding, all of it knowledgeable and sensible. But what makes the book outstanding is Barbara Holland's intense hardheadedness about these remarkable animals, the depth of her knowledge, the chiseled character of her reflections (which are both wide and deep), her lack of sentimentality

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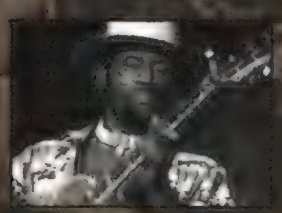
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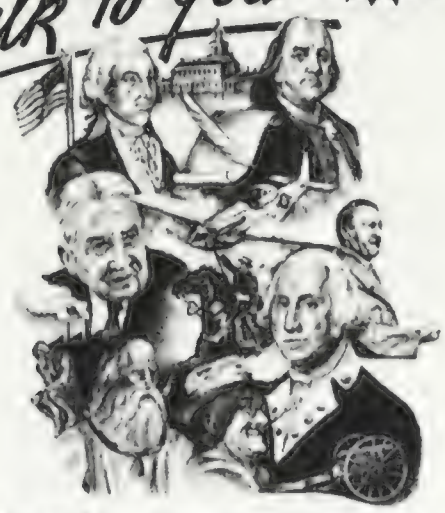

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and the clear fact of her love for cats.

Here is Holland on Sidney, a not-very-bright Siamese but her own, one of her own. She does not believe that cats have a language. But nevertheless, Sidney has many "tongues," a vocabulary even, indeed a "marvelous range of vocal expression. Some of it means something," she writes. "A booming spectral moan means he doesn't like riding in cars, and a cantankerous 'a-yow' means he's about to use the litter pan. A sharp nasal 'yan' means it's twenty after three in the morning and time to get up; this is followed by ducklike food cries of 'skwap skwap' as he hustles down the stairs urging us to follow and serve breakfast. (The fact that he keeps on hoping, though he has never been fed at that hour and often gets things thrown at him, speaks poorly for his learning ability. . . .)" But, she goes on, "a cat can tell us infinitely more than we can tell a cat, and certainly more than the great leaders can tell each other across the language barrier. A cat has, for instance, thirty different muscles in his ears, making them expressive of the subtlest shades of interest and disapproval. . . . If we live with a cat and the cat holds its ears in a certain position, we know without thinking about it that the cat is cross, or that it hears something across the room. How do we know? We just do. Perhaps we aren't so dense after all."

It is best to quote Holland some more: "A cat sits on our rug with its tail wrapped around its feet and its eyes focused on a point in the middle air, and we tell ourselves that its mind is an emptiness unimaginable to the clever human who, we like to believe, spends its idle hours musing on political economy, existentialism, and the lesser comedies of Aristophanes. Take away our words and we wouldn't be able to think of anything at all, so it stands to reason that a cat, having no words, thinks of nothing." Well, not quite. T. S. Eliot, she reminds us, said, in effect, the musing cat "is contemplating his secret name, the name that contains the compact essence of the individual cat, the kernel of his unknowable self. Mr. Eliot was being whimsical, but he was right just the same."

Holland speaks of the intelligence of cats, how they are with one another, how they are with people, how people are with them, the different kinds of cats, and always there are the most rewarding personal reflections, interpretations and opinions. Also fine anecdotes.

I myself came to cats late, having always chosen dogs. I had nothing against cats but had never invited one in. Some dozen years ago, as I parked the car at a farm for Christmas dinner, the temperature at something like zero, the ground frozen, a little ginger cat came across the field and stopped at my feet and put out a paw. Our hostess had seen him around for weeks but he was too shy to approach. He was clearly living in the wild. When we took him home he was so small and thin we thought he was a kitten. The vet said he was about 3 years old. He grew to weigh 14 pounds, a most considerable personage and companion and addition to the house and our lives until he died. He was Hodge. We have another ginger cat now, Hodge II.

Holland likes Siamese. We know that the ginger range of alley cat is the best. The way to find one is to go to your local humane society and ask if there are any red cats on hand. If there aren't, choose another of whatever breed or color, age or sex. Chances are he or she will turn out to be the best of all cats. That cat will improve your character and your life. It is just the way they are.
Bennett Schiff
Board of Editors

Perfect Pitch: A Life Story
Nicolas Slonimsky
Oxford University Press, $21.95

In 1953, when Nicolas Slonimsky was a mere slip of a lad at the age of 59, he was responsible for one of the most memorable collections of comments about music ever published. Calling it *A Lexicon of Musical Invective*, the great lexicographer gathered into a fairly slender volume hundreds of the most misguided musical opinions ever bedded down in a single book.

Seeking out examples of music reviews in some of their most flagrant misjudgments, he reminds his readers that Pitts Sanborn, in 1936, thought that "Rachmaninoff's *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini* sometimes sounds like a plague of insects in the Amazon valley." And that in London in 1829 a writer in *The Harmonicum* prophesied that the "*Heroic Symphony* of Beethoven contains much to admire, but it is difficult to keep up admiration of this kind during three long quarters of an hour. . . . If this symphony is not by some means abridged, it will soon fall into disuse."

Exactly a quarter of a century later, serving as editor of the "completely revised" *Sixth Edition of Baker's Dictionary of Musicians*, Slonimsky, by that time a ripe 84 years of age, wrote in a marvelous 22-page preface, "If I were to write an autobiography (which God forbid) I would call it *I am a footnote*, or *I am a parenthesis*." God, however, in His infinite wisdom, did not forbid Nicky to write an autobiography, which, at the more mature age of 94, he has done. Forsaking his earlier plans for a title, however, he has called his life story *Perfect Pitch*, a double entendre you may read any way you choose.

In trying to tell you about Slonimsky and his new self-history, no one could possibly surpass the description he gave of himself in that historic *Sixth Edition of Baker's*. He wrote, "Slonimsky, Nicolas, Russian-American musicologist; b. St. Petersburg, April 27, 1894. A failed *wunderkind*, he was given his first piano lesson by his illustrious maternal aunt, Isabelle Vengerova, on Nov. 6, 1900. Possessed by inordinate ambition, aggravated by the endemic intellectuality of his family of both maternal and paternal branches (novelists, revolutionary poets, literary critics, university professors) . . . he became determined to excel beyond common decency in all these doctrines; as an adolescent, wrote out his future biography accordingly, setting down his death date in 1967, but survived."

Fortunately for all of us, the famous musical historian and practitioner has long since passed well beyond the date he gave for the end of his life. That he carries his riper years with ease was apparent to all those who saw and heard him taking part in the Liszt Centennial seminars, concerts and other events in Washington, D.C. in 1986 (SMITHSONIAN, August 1986). There he demonstrated clearly the truth of his recent vigor, saying, "I refuse to believe I am 92. I don't even have a white beard or bushy eyebrows to attest my age. My eyes still see, my ears still ring with sounds, and my jaws (yes, especially my jaws) are still sufficiently lubricated on their maxillary supports to sustain a steady flow of garrulity."

All of the wit, the astounding literary pungency, the occasional superbly placed knife between the ribs, the personal acquaintance with hundreds of the world's most celebrated musical figures (not only his Aunt Isabelle, but Serge Koussevitzky, Edgard Varese, Charles Ives, Henry Cowell, Arthur Rubinstein—for whom Nicky conducted a performance of the Brahms *B Flat Concerto* in Paris in 1932), and a universe of music and its practice and practitioners, live and breathe—sometimes a little fire, or more than a little—in *Perfect Pitch*.

On the shelf where I keep 14 reference books to which I turn day after day, knowing that their contents are accurate, only two were prepared by the same man. It is this Slonimsky to whom I am thus singularly indebted: for the *Lexicon*, with which a music critic can always prove how wrong many music critics have been, and for the *Sixth Edition of Baker's*, which tells the truth about thousands of musicians. Hail, Slonimsky! And when does the next book come out?

Paul Hume
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Washington Post

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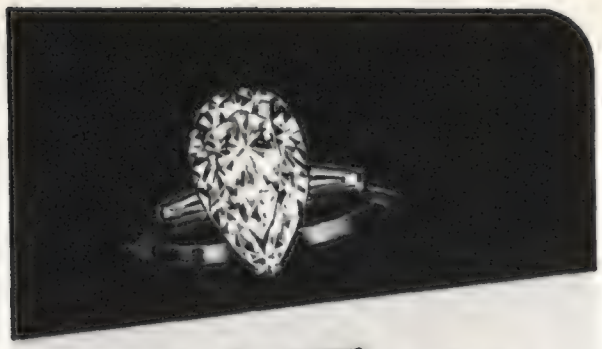

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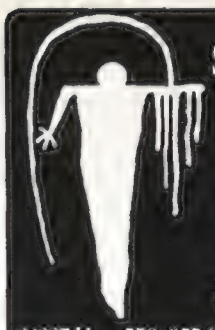

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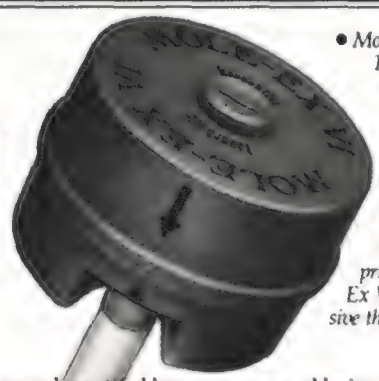

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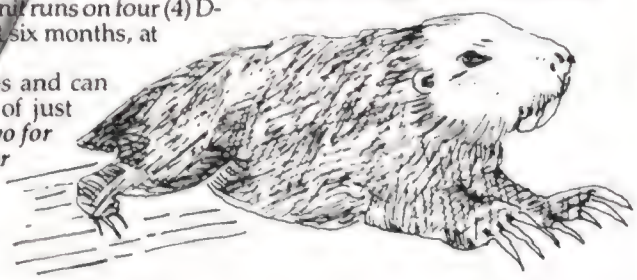

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Our Government and the Arts: A Perspective from the Inside
Livingston Biddle
ACA Books, $24.95; $16.95, paper

This book is absolutely essential to anyone hoping to understand the epochal changes in the social, political and financial situations of the arts that have taken place in this country over the past quarter of a century.

A major factor in all of these changes has been the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA). Until the NEA began to make itself felt in the country, it was universally considered that government support of the arts was something Europeans did. Americans did not (except in such an emergency as the Depression, when the New Deal took the revolutionary view that artists were entitled to make-work eating money as much as leaf rakers and even the contractors for all those new post offices). What Americans did was to rely at first on the individual largesse of the rich, then on the corporate largesse of the lengthened shadows of the rich—and not-so-rich—stockholders in commerce, finance and industry.

What the NEA has done is not to replace direct corporate and individual support, but to augment it with government support in steadily increasing amounts under administrations of both parties. In theory, America thus ends up with the best of both traditional systems, and things may indeed work out that way someday.

No one is as qualified as Livingston Biddle to tell the long and at times complex story of the NEA from its earliest inception through its long legislative parturition, and through the various threats and opportunities it has encountered.

He was an aide to Senator Claiborne Pell of Rhode Island when the two of them dreamed up the idea. Biddle wrote the legislation, enlisted bicameral and bipartisan support, assisted at the relevant hearings, shepherded the bill through passage and has never lost touch with the new order thus created. He served as deputy to Roger Stevens, the first chairman; was in charge of legislative liaison for chairman Nancy Hanks, whose brilliant work led to the astonishing expansion of funding under President Nixon; and was chairman himself during the Carter Administration. After the first Reagan Inauguration, Biddle worked to save the NEA

from the projected halving of funds and ultimate folding-in of the operation that was envisioned by a new crop of zealous bureaucrats.

Biddle writes of all these things in graceful, easy prose (he was a successful novelist before coming to Washington) and with what seems total recall. The book is full of anecdotes, but the anecdotes are by the way—not offered in lieu of substance and analysis, as happens elsewhere in town.

Some things that happened might have been expected, but were not widely known. Biddle places them on the record. For example, wives interested in the arts have had an incalculable effect on their husbands' support of NEA legislation and the program itself: the most important art lectures of all may have been curtain lectures.

In the early years, Biddle writes, there was an almost universal assumption that the arts part of the sister endowments, NEA and the National Endowment for the Humanities, would be absorbed into, administered by and subservient to the humanities part. There was an equally widespread assumption that the whole thing would become one more division of the Smithsonian Institution.

Neither assumption became reality, thanks in great part to Roger Stevens' vigorous spirit of independence. That independence has resulted in unprecedented and extremely fruitful support for regional theater throughout the country, and what amounts to the creation of American ballet beyond New York City. And those are only the most visible benefits. As a result of the extended efforts lovingly described by Biddle—including his own—the United States is now at least in the same league as the rest of the Western world in recognizing that the arts are good things in life, and that in the arts, as elsewhere, government should do for the people what the people need but are not able to do for themselves.

Biddle, not unreasonably, tends to walk mostly on the sunny side of the street. From an outsider's perspective, not unreasonably, a few things appear differently. His passage on the defense of "peer judgment," in the process of reviewing and approving grants to artists, against the dread bureaucratic ideal of "accountability," is suspenseful. In the end, the good guys—peers and paladins—win. Unmentioned however, is the possibility, often the reality (it is not difficult to see with what opportunity for complications), of this year's grantor becoming next year's grantee as the door revolves.

Again, the "art for public places" program has produced some decided enhancements of urban prospects, and Biddle is justly proud of it. Yet the plunking down of Richard Serra's *Tilted Arc* as a steel wall bisecting Foley Square in Manhattan destroyed a luncheon site enjoyed from time immemorial by the workers and passers-by whose lives were supposed to be enhanced by it. And what seemed like the entire art world concurred in denouncing those workers who protested and in defending the right of the artist to express himself. There is obviously something not quite right.

All the same, here is an invaluable record of a vital growth in the arts, told as only this author could tell it.

Frank Getlein
Author and critic

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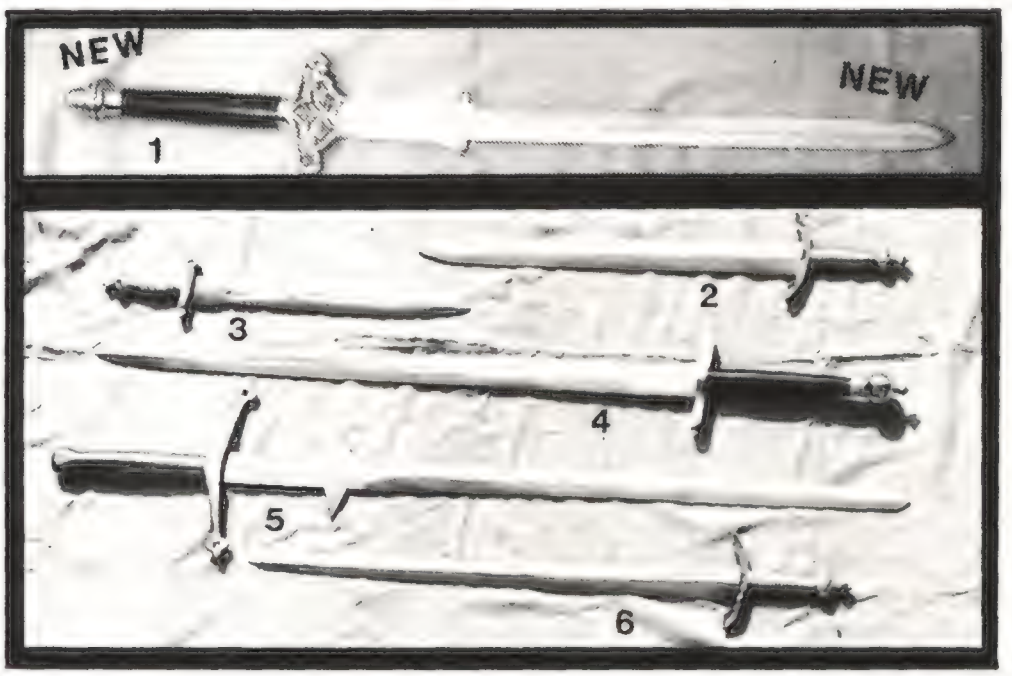

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Additional reading

"Crossroads" exhibit (p. 42)

Crossroads of Continents: Cultures of Siberia and Alaska by William W. Fitzhugh and Aron Crowell, Smithsonian Institution Press, 1988

"Capitalist Philanthropy and Russian Revolutionaries: The Jesup North Pacific Expedition (1897-1902)" by Stanley A. Freed, Ruth S. Freed and Laila Williamson, *American Anthropologist*, March 1988

Arctic Passage: The Turbulent History of the Land and People of the Bering Sea 1697-1975 by William R. Hunt, Scribner's, 1975

Edgar Degas (p. 58)

Degas by Jean Sutherland Boggs (exhibition catalog), Metropolitan Museum of Art and National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, 1988

Edgar-Hilaire-Germain Degas by Daniel Catton Rich, Abrams, 1985

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Mice All Over by Peter Crowcroft, G. T. Foulis (London), 1966

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Stone quarries (p. 86)

Stone Country by Scott R. Sanders, photographs by Jeffrey A. Wolin,

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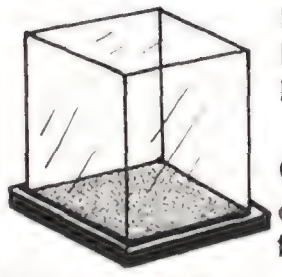

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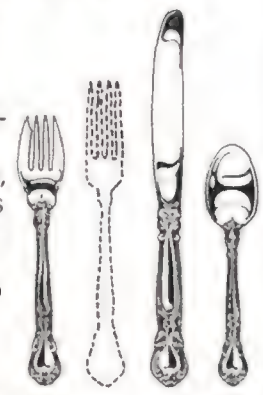

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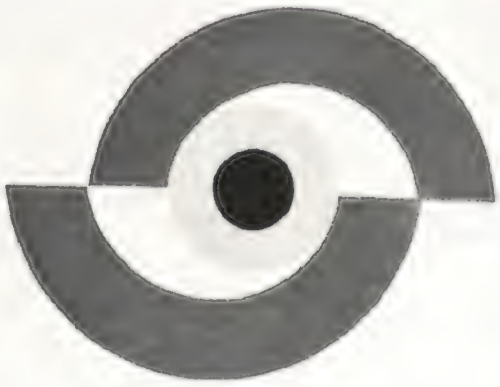

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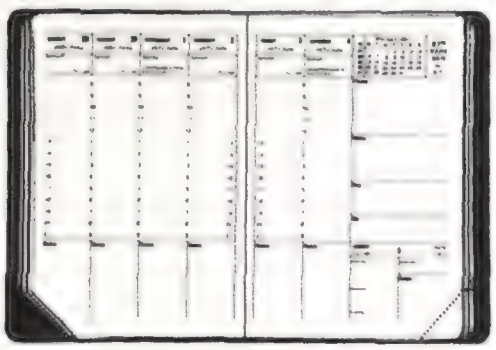

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Freer closing

The Freer Gallery of Art has closed for approximately three years as a construction project linking the museum with the Sackler Gallery begins.

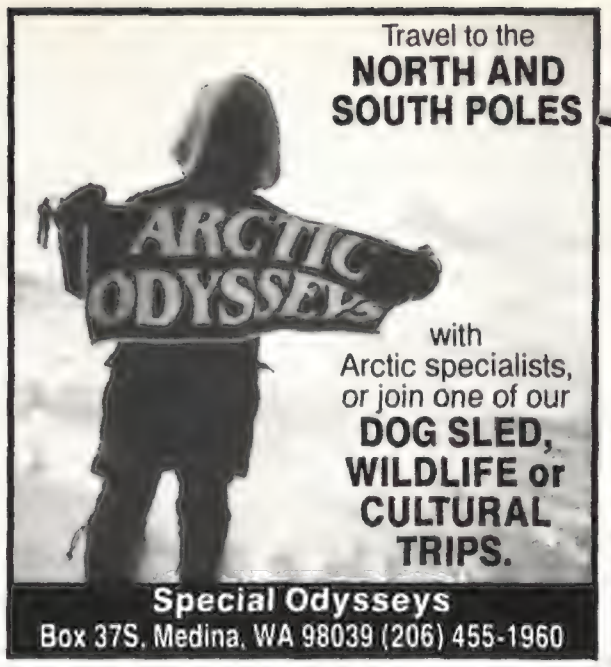
New Air and Space restaurant

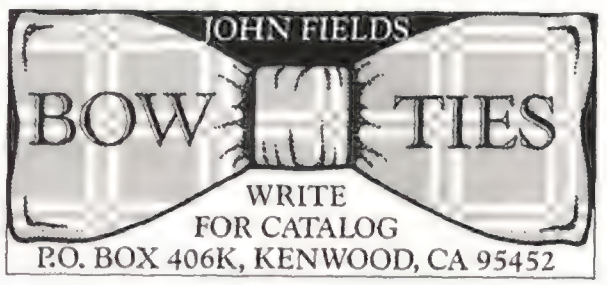
The dining facility on the museum's east terrace is now serving from 10 A.M. to 5 P.M. daily.

Special October exhibits and events

Arthur M. Sackler Gallery
Japanese Art: Recent Acquisitions (opens October 8) A spectacular ceremonial palanquin and a pair of 17th-century six-panel folding screens. (See *Highlights continued*, page 212.)
Art of India: Painting and Decorative Objects (through December 31) Fifteen pieces, 13th through 19th centuries.
Japanese Art at the Sackler Gallery (October 10; 6:30 P.M.) Lecture by assistant curator Ann Yonemura.

Hirshhorn Museum & Sculpture Garden
Alberto Giacometti: 1901-1966 (through





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November 13) Sculptures, paintings and drawings in the first American survey since 1974 to honor the Swiss artist.
Alberto Giacometti: An International Symposium (October 28: 7 P.M.; October 29: 10 A.M. to 4:30 P.M.) Experts discuss the artist's life and works.
Directions: Walter Pichler (October 26 through January 22) Fantastical drawings by the Austrian artist.
Krzysztof Wodiczko: Works (October 25, 26, 27; 9 P.M.) Monumental slide projections by the Polish-born artist on the Hirshhorn's curved exterior. Accompanying exhibition through January 22.

Anacostia Museum
Climbing Jacob's Ladder: The Rise of Black Churches in Eastern American Cities, 1740-1877 (through October 30) Artifacts, photographs and documents in a historical overview from 13 cities.

National Museum of American Art
Lucas Samaras: Objects and Subjects 1969-1986 (through October 16) Sculpture, photography, painting, assemblage.

National Museum of American History
The American Presidency, 1789-1989 (October 15-June) More than 400 objects and photographs.
Commemorating New Sweden (October 21-January 31) A 350th anniversary look at the first Swedish settlers and their Algonquin Indian neighbors in the Delaware River Valley.
There's No Business Like Show Business: Irving Berlin's Centennial (through January 31) A commemoration of one of America's best-loved composers.

National Portrait Gallery
On the Air: Pioneers of American Broadcasting (October 7-January 2) The golden age of radio and television through portraits and memorabilia.
Polaroid Portraits (through December 4) Remarkable ways Polaroid film has been used to make portraits.
A Funny Thing Happened to Tonto (October 13; 7:30 P.M.) Slide lecture by Dr. Rennard Strickland explores the presentation of native Americans in American film.

National Museum of Natural History
Crossroads of Continents: Cultures of Siberia and Alaska (through April 2) First jointly curated Soviet-North American exhibit ever organized: history, art, traditional cultures seen through more than 500 artifacts. (See page 42.)

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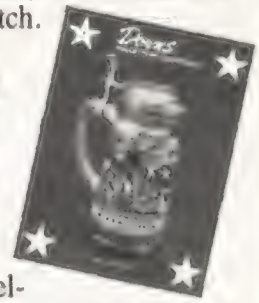

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European Space Agency Overview of recent scientific missions by ESA.

Focus on Flight (October 31-April) Forty prizewinning photographs.

Yeager on Yeager (October 20; 7:30 P.M.) Chuck Yeager discusses the right stuff in a lecture. Free tickets (four per person) distributed at 5 P.M. that day at NASM.

Cooper-Hewitt Museum (New York)

Erich Mendelsohn: 1887-1953 (October 18-January 8) Drawings encompassing the career of a major architect.

The Modern Dutch Poster: The First Fifty Years, 1890-1940 (October 4-January 8) Overview of Dutch poster arts.

What Could Have Been: Unbuilt Architecture of the '80s (through October 16) Drawings and models.

Burghley House: The Countess' Gems (through November 27) Jewels and ornate stone vessels.

Renwick Gallery

Stephen de Staebler: The Figure (October 21-February 12) Thirty-five clay and bronze life-size sculptures.

American Art Pottery, 1880-1930 (through February 5) Seventy-five examples by a range of artisans.

Art and Labour: Ruskin, Morris and the Craftsmen Ideal in America (October 6; 8 P.M.) Historian Eileen Boris discusses her book.

Exhibition catalogs

Catalogs available currently include:

Alberto Giacometti (paper, $24.95; cloth, $50)

Crossroads of Continents: Cultures of Siberia and Alaska (paper, $24.95; cloth, $45)

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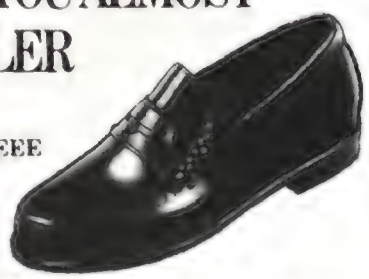

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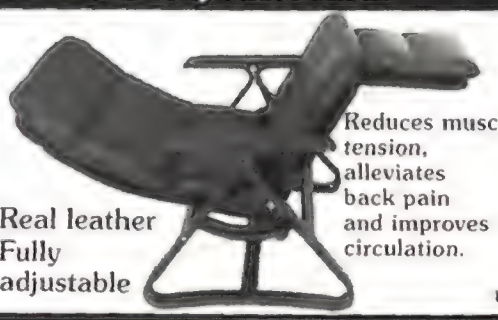

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The Movie Palaces: Documentary rebroadcast, PBS, October 14. Check listings.
Smithsonian World: "The Living Smithsonian" profiles scientists, musicians and historians preserving our heritage, on October 24. Check PBS listings.

Lecture and Seminar Program

The Program brings lectures on art and on politics, a seminar on gems, and American folk songs to Chicago's northwest suburbs from October 20-23.

For further information, write to the Lecture and Seminar Program, 1100 Jefferson Drive S.W., Room 3045, Washington, D.C. 20560, (202) 357-1350.

Resident Associate Program

To become a Resident Associate, or for fee and ticket information, call 357-3030. Here are some October events:
Glasnost and All That Jazz! (October 21; 7:30 P.M.) Moscow's Igor Bril Quartet.
Tropical Wetlands in Vietnam (October 17; 6 and 8:30 P.M.) Ornithologist George Archibald on his recent visit.

Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service

SITES organizes and circulates exhibitions to cities throughout the United States and abroad. To sponsor a show in your community, write SITES, Smithsonian, Washington, D.C. 20560. Here are some October exhibits:
Appleton, Wisconsin (October 22-November 30) *Vietnam Veterans Memorial: A National Experience*, Appleton Gallery of Arts.
Fayetteville, North Carolina (October 9-November 20) *Polished Perfection: The Art of Turned-Wood Bowls*, Fayetteville Museum of Art.
Grinnell, Iowa (October 8-November 6) *Daughters of the Southwest: Women Anthropologists and the Native American Southwest, 1880-1980*, Grinnell College.
Tempe, Arizona (October 22-November 20) *The Grand Generation: Memory, Mastery, Legacy*, Arizona State University.

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A prize purchase from old Japan

When assistant curator Ann Yonemura spied "a fine lacquer palanquin, Edo period" in a 1984 Sotheby's catalog, she leapt at the chance to acquire a rare treasure for the Sackler Gallery.

Actually, someone else had gotten there just ahead of her. Yonemura tracked the lavishly ornamented, shogunate-era passenger carrier to the hands of a New York dealer. And so the ceremonial conveyance, one of a handful in the world, became the new gallery's first purchase.

Taking possession of the object was one matter. Restoring its original splendor was quite another. The palanquin fitted out for a princess had, according to rumor, languished in a less-than-climate-controlled Scottish barn.

It was up to a team of conservators to combat the consequences of neglect. More than a dozen experts from the Sackler, the Freer and the Smithsonian's Conservation Analytical Laboratory pooled their ingenuity to remove layers of encrusted grime, dust and mold.

The palanquin, they found, was testament to the genius of cadres of artisans. From a complex of workshops in early 19th-century Kyoto, painters and gilders, woodworkers and lacquerers labored to produce this most sumptuous of wedding conveyances. Enclosed in a chamber paneled with paintings on gold-leaf paper, a noble bride had traveled to her marriage with a lord of the Tokugawa clan.

More than 700 gilt-copper fittings required painstaking, under-the-microscope cleaning. The lacquered surface, covered in an interlace pattern worked in gold powder, had to be restored to its original sheen. Conservators devised their own plastic instruments to prevent scratches, and tested scores of cleaning potions along the way.

It was, as conservator Jane Norman puts it, "a massive undertaking." It was also a labor of love.

The palanquin goes on view in the Sackler Gallery on October 8.

Kathleen M. Burke

Conservator Kyoichi Itoh sets restored crest in coffered palanquin ceiling.

Painted scenes from 11th-century novel, *Tale of Genji,* adorn walls of interior.

Mixing pigments and gold paint by hand, Yoshiyuki Nishio applies the finishing touches to crane-emblazoned panel.

Gold-and-lacquer compartment, ornamented with crests of two families united in marriage, required six bearers to man 15-foot-long carrying beam.

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Domestic Study Tours

Florida Keys October 22-28: Study coral reefs, hardwood hammocks and tide pools during a sojourn on Big Pine Key with marine biologists.

Okefenokee November 1-6 or May 2-7, 1989: For novice or expert canoeists; discover the beauty of this wildlife refuge near Jacksonville.

Smithsonian Sampler Weekend November 11-13: For all ages. Private tours highlight collections at selected museums.

Christmas at the Smithsonian December 2-4: Welcome the holidays with tours, music and festive dining.

Christmas in Asheville December 23-26: Celebrate the holiday at North Carolina's historic Grove Park Inn.

Hawaii January 22-February 3 or February 12-24: Explore the diversity of four islands on this active nature tour.

Florida Springs February 6-10: Canoe the freshwater springs of central Florida and see the endangered West Indian manatee.

Baja Whale Watch February 23-March 3: Aboard the *Royal Polaris*, follow gray whale migration from San Diego to Scammon's Lagoon, with stops at several islands.

Death Valley March 7-16 or 20-29: Explore the mountains and canyons of the Mojave Desert area on foot and by van.

Big Bend March 22-31: Hike in this wild and scenic park; also visit Carlsbad Caverns and McDonald Observatory.

Sojourn in Tucson April 1-8 or 15-22: Local experts provide an overview of the area's multiethnic folklore and natural history.

Savannah-Charleston April 2-9: Learn about historic homes and gardens in these graceful Southern cities.

Delta Queen April 7-14: Take a steamboat journey into America's past on the lower Mississippi from New Orleans to Memphis.

Foreign Study Tours

People's Republic of China A variety of itineraries in 1988 and 1989. Tours for new and repeat travelers.

NEW India Arts and Crafts November 4-26: Unique program focuses on village artisans; also includes trips to Agra, Ahmedabad and Bombay.

Thailand November 6-24: Enjoy colorful cities, remote villages and archaeological sites in this exotic country.

NEW Argentina November 6-27: Explore natural and historical diversity from the wildlife spectacle at Valdés Peninsula to remote parts of the northwest.

Smithsonian Christmas Enjoy the holidays on the tropical island of Fiji or in the warm climate of New Zealand; or celebrate in one of four idyllic European settings including England (Winchester or Canterbury), Austria and Switzerland.

Antarctica and Falkland Islands December 27-January 12: Aboard the M.V. *Society Explorer*, thrill to spectacular scenery, visit research stations, photograph wildlife, learn of historic explorations.

Mesoamerican Study Programs January and February: Yucatán, El Tajin or Guatemala.

Backstage London January 1-11: Attend traditional and avant-garde productions, meet performers backstage.

South America Voyage January 6-30: Cruise from Rio to Santiago through the Strait of Magellan, Beagle Channel *and* around Cape Horn. Includes Iguaçú Falls.

NEW Leningrad Arts Seminar January 27-February 8: An overview of art, architecture, history with visits to the Hermitage and Russian museums. Pretrip program in Washington features Hillwood's Russian collection.

Kenya-Tanzania Wildlife Safari January 21-February 7: A unique journey to East Africa.

India Wildlife Safari January 22-February 18: Travel by elephant and jeep to observe rare species of birds and animals.

Australia-New Zealand February 5-28: A highlights tour that includes wondrous wildlife and intriguing cultures.

NEW Paris in Winter February 8-17: Experience art, theater, commerce, cuisine and more, in the quiet of the off-season.

Red Sea Passage February 16-27: The splendors and mystique of ancient Egypt are revealed during this exotic ten-day cruise. Ends in Cairo.

NEW Budapest Music Festival March 15-26: International performers gather to celebrate musical traditions.

NEW Sea of Cortez March 19-29: Cruise Mexico's Gulf of California. See blue whales and other wildlife.

NEW Jamaica March: Study the customs and culture of this delightful island.

Costa Rica March 25-April 8: Learn about flora, birds and other wildlife in the American tropics.

Kyoto Seminar March 25-April 9: Reside in a traditional Japanese ryokan. Explore language, history and culture.

Berlin April 12-26: An intimate look at fabulous Berlin, East and West. Includes travel to Dresden, Wittenberg and Weimar.

May in Greece Marvel at classical wonders and beautiful landscapes from Athens to Thessaloníki.

Danube Voyage May 23-June 9: Cruise from Rumania to West Germany aboard the *Theodor Körner*. Study the art and history of countries linked by this major waterway.

Cotswold Walks May 25-June 6: Walk along woodland and meadow paths in the heart of England. Stay at lovely old coaching inns.

Florence Seminar May 27-June 11: Live in an elegant villa-hotel and study the Renaissance.

Cities of Central Asia May 27-June 8: Begin in Leningrad, then fly to Samarkand and Bukhara. Ends in Moscow.

European Countryside Programs Spring-Fall 1989: Reside in scenic and historic areas of England, France, Germany, Austria, Hungary, Italy, Switzerland, Wales or the USSR.

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Smithsonian Seminars

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Crossroads of Continents: Cultures of Siberia and Alaska
November 2-5
Explore the varied cultures of this remote region at the National Museum of Natural History as you view this landmark exhibition (see page 42), jointly organized by Soviet and North American museums. See more than 500 objects crafted by native peoples of Siberia and Alaska.

Japan: The Shaping of Daimyo Culture 1185-1868
November 2-5
Be among the first to enjoy this splendid exhibition of more than 450 historic objects including lacquer ware, ceramics, screens and paintings at the National Gallery of Art. During illustrated lectures, learn about the daimyo, powerful feudal lords of premodern Japan, art patrons for several centuries.

New Perspectives on the Impressionists
January 11-14
Tour the superb collections at the National Gallery of Art and learn how recent scholarship provides new insights on the French Impressionists.

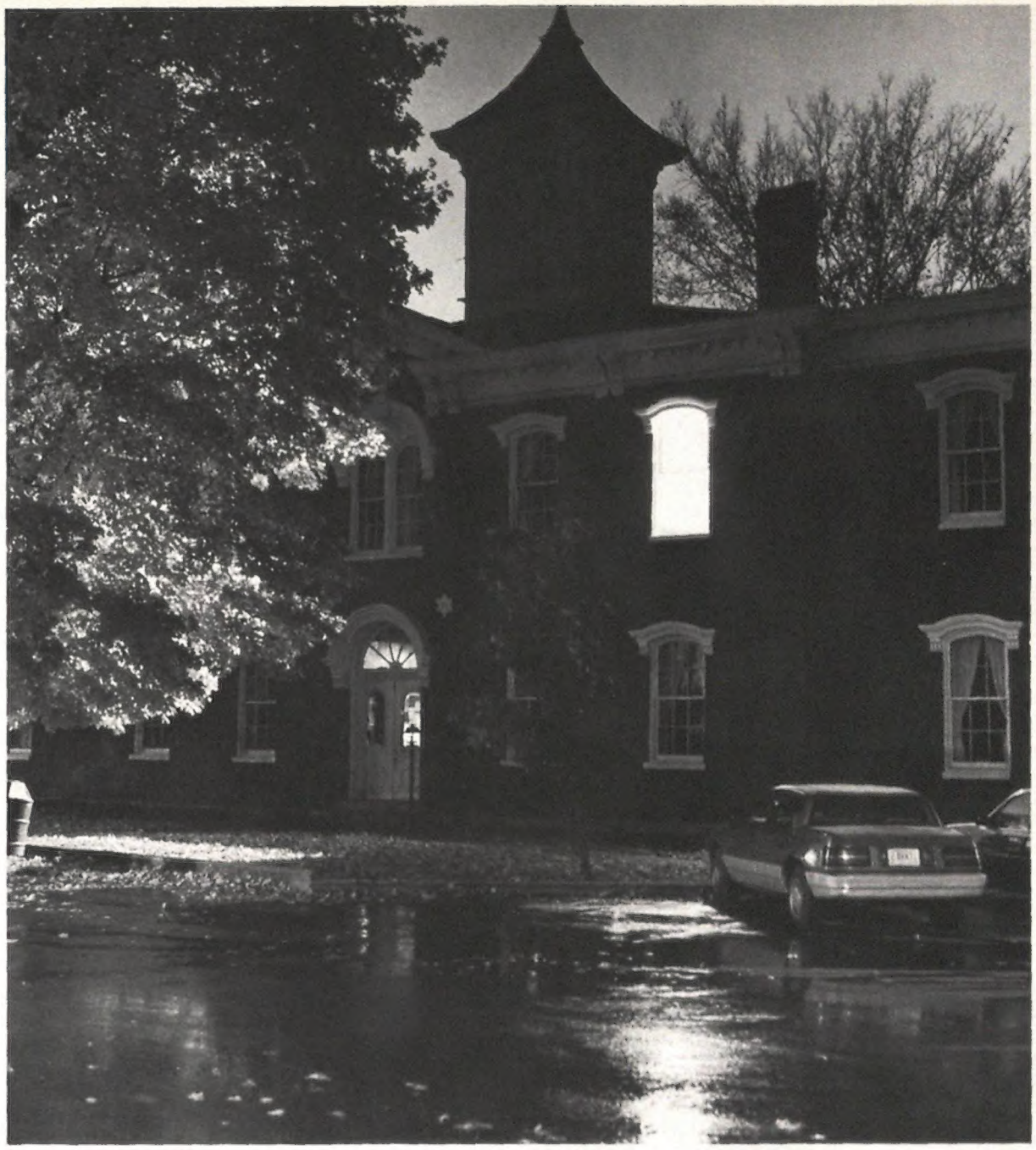
Jazz in America
January 11-14
Renowned jazz scholar Martin Williams, who selected and annotated *The Smithsonian Collection of Classic Jazz*, surveys the development of this distinctive art form.

The Homestead
Hot Springs, Virginia, January 22-26
Enjoy a winter break at the famed resort in the beautiful Allegheny Mountains of western Virginia. Discover the Homestead's unique combination of architectural beauty, Southern grace and superb guest amenities as you choose between two stimulating seminars.

The Art and Craft of Creative Writing
Study the basic techniques and fine points with Edwards Park, author of SMITHSONIAN's monthly column *Around the Mall and beyond.*

American Popular Song
Relive America's glorious golden age of song with acclaimed jazz pianist John Eaton, who discusses and performs the works of Gershwin, Porter and Berlin.

or (202) 357-1350 for seminar brochures.



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ELECTION NIGHT in Moore County, Tennessee is a long one for the folks who count the votes.

We like to see them working late, for it means a goodly number of our citizens turned out at the polls that day. And as far as we're concerned, voting is what our country is all about. We hope you'll stay mindful of that as the national election draws closer. Remember, there's no shortage of folks to do the counting. What we need is more of us to get out there and vote.

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By Lionel Casson

howandwhypunctuation evercametobeinvented

I dropped by New York's Cooper Union a while back to take in an interesting show, "Period Styles: A History of Punctuation." The pun may not be so good, but the show was great.

During my days in the service, every now and then I was put to censoring my unit's letters; now I know that all the inditers who began with "howareyoufineihope" were reviving an ancient tradition. Count your blessings, readers of today. If you were living during the years of Greece's glory or Rome's grandeur, that last sentence would have looked like this:

COUNTYOURBLESSINGS
READERSOFTODAY

And, if it had been an inscription on a public monument in Athens, say, where the watchword was balance and proportion above all, it would have looked like this:

COUNTYOU
R B L E S S I N
G S R E A D E R
S O F T O D A Y

With thickets like that to get through, only a child abuser would complain about why Johnny couldn't read.

It wasn't until sometime around the fourth century B.C. that readers got a break. Not much of one, though, just a lowly *paragraphos* (literally a "mark written alongside"), which meant a short line sticking out into the left-hand margin to signify that a change of topic was occurring. Whether the change actually came at the beginning of the line or at the end or somewhere in the middle was the reader's problem. In those times a little punctuation was supposed to go a long way.

Then, in the third century B.C., enter Aristophanes of Byzantium. He was Greece's Samuel Johnson, the man who worked up the nearest thing to a dictionary Hellas ever had. Not only did he earn himself the right to be called the father of punctuation, he ran the world's greatest library, put out a definitive edition of Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, and even found time to write a book about courtesans.

The *paragraphos*, Aristophanes reasoned, was all to the good. But a few signposts here and there at the edge of a trackless forest didn't seem adequate. What about some trail markers strewn along the way? Aristophanes worked out a system of dots. Of course his books, like everybody else's, were all printed out in capitals, cheek by jowl, like soldiers in a close-order drill. However, when he came to the end of a complete thought, or *periodos* (literally "a way around"), he flagged it by sticking in a dot high up—like this ˙ And when he came to the end of a *colon*, or "limb" of a complete thought, he flagged it with a dot right on the line—like this. To mark a *comma*, a "piece" of a *colon*, he did the flagging with a dot halfway up —like this ·

If that's the system the father of punctuation laid down, how come we're not using it? How come, for example, we put the dot that marks the end of a complete thought down here . instead of up here ˙ ? Because of the monks in the Middle Ages, that's how come.

I always thought of monks as humble, canon-law-abiding citizens. And maybe they were—in the refectory and the chapel. But not in the scriptorium with a manuscript in front of them, where maybe fires of punctuational revolt flared. Look what these holy men did to Aristophanes' way of marking a slight pause. Not for them the minimalism of a dot, particularly one precariously suspended at midheight · With a flourish of the quill they stroked in a dashing slash, like this / .

As time went on, however, the good brothers must have lost their nerve, because gradually the slash lost dash / and still more dash ⸗ until, just before it dwindled to the ignominy of an Aristophanic dot, they defiantly gave it the curl that commas proudly wear to this day. Monks liked curls; it was they who put one into the question mark, too. That took a while though; for ages and ages the poor, quizzical thing looked like a bedraggled telephone doodle, and even after it got its proper shape it refused to grow up. For years it stayed like this ?.

The Cooper Union show had a big section devoted to the whys and wherefores of leaving out punctuation marks today, the way, for example, Richard Wright did in certain passages of *Native Son*. But there's nothing about the other side of the coin—multiplying them. In a comic strip you can't express surprise with just ! At a minimum it's got to be !! And if I remember right, any red-blooded hero's haymaker is worth at least a "Pow!!" and more often "Pow!!!" Villains foiled reply with "Curses!!!" or might even emit a blood-curdling "Bhsvft!ȡ!ʔ!"

The show also dealt with the eschewing of capital letters, gratuitously or otherwise. While long on that eschewer par excellence, e.e. cummings, there's not even mention of don marquis, whose literary cockroach, archy, never, never used them. That's all right, though. The point is how writers avoid capitals to create certain effects. archy, who used to sneak into the office at night when everybody had left and bang out poetical flights on don marquis' old typewriter, had a more kinetic reason. He was obliged to type cockroach-style, by bouncing on each key in turn, and even a superbug like archy couldn't bounce on a letter AND hold the shift key down at the same time.

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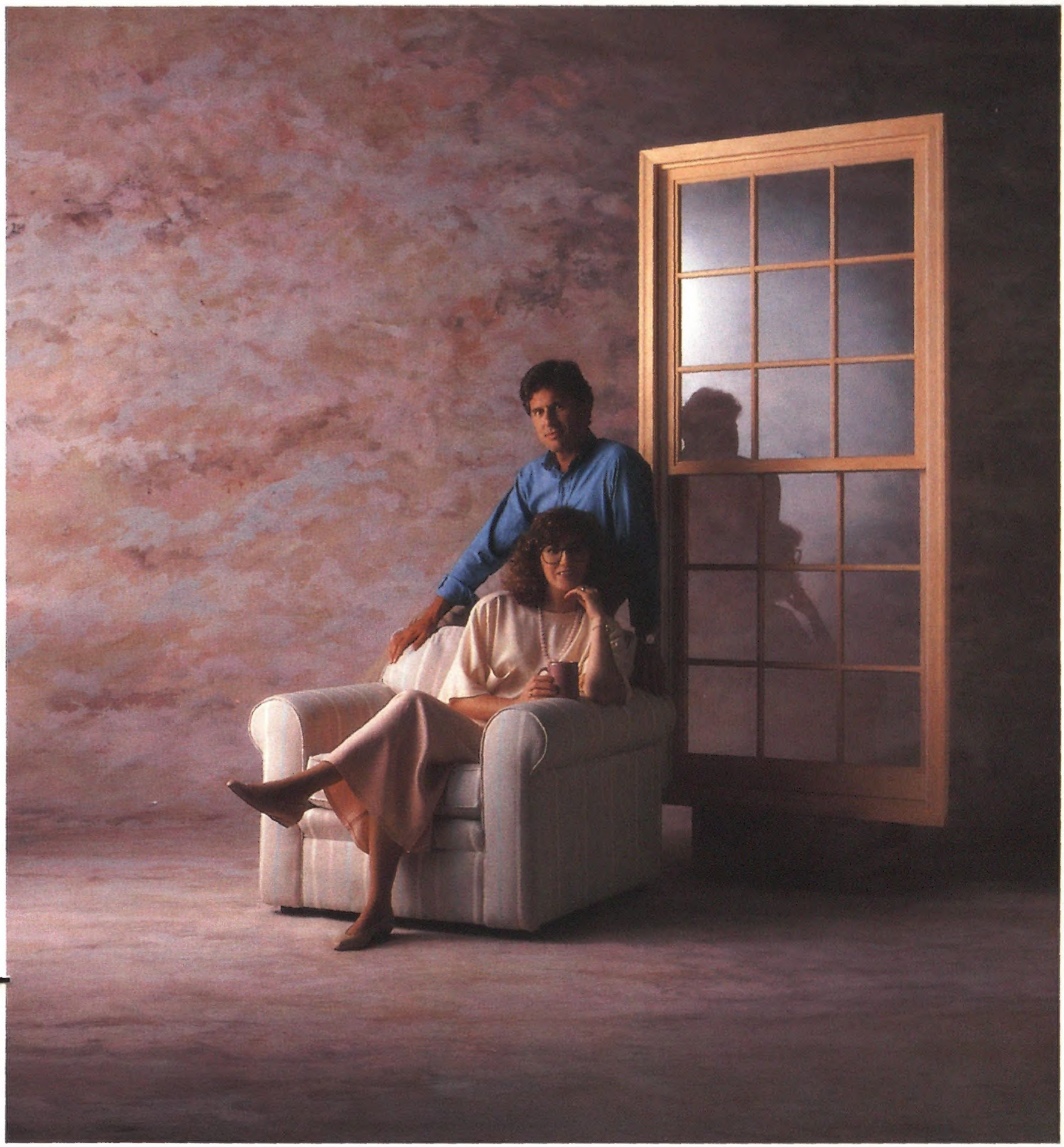

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